

Reviews: New York

Fran Siegel

Margaret Thatcher Projects

"Trace" was a subtle, attractive installation of Fran Siegel's recent work that hovers at the boundaries of sculpture, painting, and photography. Siegel takes her cues from nature, and "Trace" reflected the artist's recent move to southern California.

Strata 10, rendered on two thin layers of clear and translucent plastic, was unceremoniously suspended from the wall on grommets popped through its upper corners. Siegel starts with photographs of the rocky Pacific coast, enhances them on the computer, where they become diffuse, and then silk-screens them onto the plastic sheets. She further distorts the images with graphite, acrylic, and oil pastel. The result is an ephemeral topographical image that defies specific identification. It is a place on the margins of sky, sea, and land—an icy landscape melting and evaporating into a steaming atmosphere. *Force Field*, by contrast, achieved a more stable presence. Here, the topographical marks are etched into a copper panel. The original glowing copper surface surrounded by black areas incised by acid suggests an aerial view of a massive archipelago.

The 48 porcelain funnels constituting *Dispersion* were each attached to the wall at the narrow end and perforated like sieves. They cast deep shadows punctured by dots of light. Though their shapes suggest seashells, their unglazed surfaces are reminiscent of smooth, dry sand dollars, and each has an ambiguous navel-like blister lodged in the funnel tip, camouflaging any precise reference to



Fran Siegel, *Strata 10*, 2004, graphite, acrylic, oil pastel, and silk screen on clear and translucent Duralar (2 layers), 62" x 40". Margaret Thatcher Projects.

nature. As with Siegel's other work, her initial observations from life have been thoroughly distilled into emblems of her own sensibility.

—Rex Weil