

BROOKLYN RAIL

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON ARTS, POLITICS, AND CULTURE



MAILINGLIST

ArtSeen

Connected

by Noah Dillon

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Connected presents works by five contemporary artists inspired by the gallery's concurrent exhibition, *Anonymous Tantra Paintings*. Through the artists included here, Tantra's medieval Indian tradition touches Modernism's history. Although artists have long mined hermetic traditions, few express such affection for their sources. "Meta" (2010), a drawing by Mel Bernstine, depicts two arrays of multicolored lines that intersect to form a diamond. Bobbie Oliver's washy, monochromatic painting is fine, but like the Tantra paintings, her works grow increasingly persuasive when viewed in series. Bernstine and Oliver's pieces elicit the modest formalism of the Indian referents: spare Euclidean patterning on the one hand and gestural inventiveness on the other. Léonie Guyer's "Untitled, FR-30" (2010) exudes enlightened levity: Two blank sheets of creamy antique paper are pasted together, inscribed with one small, sweet, organic outline in pale yellow and faint graphite. In Benjamin Berlow's "Untitled" (2005), a small square floats on black ink, which drapes over the page of a book, effacing the text. Sherman Sam's loose, spidery pencil lines subtly convey grace and sanctuary, while referencing John Cage's musical notation. Though it is difficult to match the sensibility of the anonymous Tantra paintings shown nearby, these works honor this nearly forgotten tradition.