



## Corinne Wasmuht

WRITTEN BY: Greg Lindquist

Friedrich Petzel Gallery

IMAGE COURTESY OF: Friedrich Petzel Gallery



"Brueckenstr." 2008. Oil on wood. 89.37" x 204.33"

Corinne Wasmuht's recent solo exhibition at Friedrich Petzel Gallery conceived a landscape encompassing both natural and urban stimuli, reflecting the technological and the handmade processes in which they were created. Curated by Andrea Teschke, the show consists of three mural-sized paintings and an oil-painted wall installation. As thumbnail-sized images in print and web reproduction, the paintings' seeming hard-edged shapes, overly saturated color, and simplified forms suggest a graphic relationship to mechanical execution. Yet, Wasmuht's resulting work is strikingly fluid and softened by her applications of oil paint, despite using Photoshop and digital filters to synthesize and alter photographic references.

These flattened, abstracted, interwoven forms are in part a result of incorporating digital technologies into a painting process. Yet, her luminous brushwork is in contradistinction to the digital filtering of the imagery, such as in "Barrier" (all paintings 2008), in which spindly shapes seep across the picture plane. This Berlin-based, German-born painter's rendering of architecture, natural phenomena, and the figure is often counterbalanced by a deep space suggested by a subtle Renaissance one-point perspective that locates

vanishing points funneling into the center of paintings, most salient in "Brueckenstr." Curiously, this compositional approach is also central to the work of such American painters as Julie Mehretu and Benjamin Edwards.

By digitally filtering the landscape, these artists' imagery subverts an external recognizable reality, conceptualizing an internal source somewhere between the naked eye and the digital lens, the mind and the machine. Using fragmented sources and raw digital information, these artists variously condemn and celebrate this intricate virtual tapestry. And although Benjamin Edwards intends to critique American corporate culture of logos, architecture, and institutional design through his use of digital technology, his work at the same time appears as extolling as Julie Mehretu's highly abstracted geometric and linear landscape elements that are even further removed from their original sources. As nature has supplanted culture, the present landscape is undoubtedly influenced by technology. Yet, unlike her international contemporaries, Wasmuht's work equally acknowledges nature, such as in the painting "Llanganuco Falls."

When asked if she is commenting on digitalization in culture, Wasmuht replied: "I'm not trying to be criti-

cal of technology." Rather, she maintains its use as simply a tool in her process. Interestingly, at the time her exhibition opened, Wasmuht was not familiar with Benjamin Edwards' work, which is a refreshing thought considering how technologies these artists utilize, such as the internet, have accelerated the rate at which we can locate information. But then again, painters may tend to work in a vacuum, less ambiently aware of their peers' work by web surfing, but rather in a real time, geographically specific dialog within an arts community. Corinne Wasmuht's paintings conceptualize these multiple layers of enmeshed pixels, lusciously translating data to the material pigment and binder.