

# The New York Times

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## Art in Review

MARLÈNE MOCQUET

'Recent Paintings'

Freight & Volume  
542 West 24th Street, Chelsea  
Through Aug. 17

The work of the young French painter Marlène Mocquet may be something of a guilty pleasure, but what good is taste if it doesn't betray you? Working very small, on raw canvas, Ms. Mocquet treads lightly on a twisting trail that winds from Redon to August Strindberg, then to Miró, Klee and Tanguy, and ends up near Sempé, Edward Koren and Saul Steinberg. Additionally, she exploits paint's possibilities with flair, working thick, then thin, dripping, pouring and staining. She also has a wonderful feeling for jewel-like colors.

Ms. Mocquet is a lapsed Symbolist who has as much faith in paint as in the wildness of the imagination. In "The Bird Fingered Hand" a rosy-fingered hand, one of its six digits equipped with a beak and an eye, descends from the heavens to pluck a wave from the thick ocean of white and green roiling below. But the bird-finger lunges avidly toward a droplet: breakfast trumps God-like gestures.

In "King Kong," the ape is a big patch of crackled brown paint whose paw is delicately tinged with white, the color of Fay Wray's gown. And in "The Hunter," the green protagonist has ignited a prismatic explosion, launching many tiny creatures into the air and singeing himself in the process; the object of his sport, a rabbit of scumbled pink and white, looks on, clearly pleased.

Like Indian miniatures, these works reward close study.

ROBERTA SMITH