



Svenja Deininger, *untitled*, 2016–17, oil on canvas, 75 x 75".

VIENNA

## Svenja Deininger

SECESSION

Friedrichstraße 12

February 2–March 26, 2017

With their interlocking curves and shards of radiant color, Svenja Deininger's boldly geometric paintings could be diagrams for modernist heraldry. The compositions are striking, but the fascination and intrigue of these works lie in their uneven surfaces. Some areas are raised while others are recessed down to the initial gessoed surface, evidence of Deininger's assiduous cycle of adding and removing coats of pigment. Studying the edges of thicker sections, the viewer becomes a geologist, reading a history of sediment and erosion in the strata.

The artist deftly complicates and contradicts the depth of these topographies with her arrangements. A jagged chartreuse pillar in one painting (all works *untitled*, 2015–17) appears to come before the darker hues beside it, despite the fact that these shapes are more thickly layered and actually project farther out into space. An astounding range of textures adds a tactile sensuality to this disorienting terrain. In Deininger's hands, oil paint assumes the physical presence of other materials—linoleum, plaster, polished marble, lacquer, denim, and wood—and the works often conjure interiors or domestic spaces. One handsome painting with a curving swath of glossy black, bells of taupe, and bands of midnight blue evokes an

elegant living room with a grand piano.

The least successful pieces in this exhibition—which Deininger conceived specifically for this venue, her native city’s temple to creative revolution—are wall-mounted sculptures consisting of cone-shaped canvases wedged into the corners of larger polygonal frames. These paintings look lost in their oversize perimeters, magicians whose tricks are hampered by too-big tuxedos. It’s better when the works stand alone, and we are able to lose ourselves within the illusory space of their complex surfaces.

— Zoë Lescaze

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