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The New York Times.
pg. C27, March 8, 2013

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ART IN REVIEW

Jeff Elrod: 'Nobody Sees Like Us'



Matthew Septimus

A view of "Nobody Sees Like Us."

By ROBERTA SMITH
Published: March 7, 2013

MoMA PS1 Contemporary Art Center



22-25 Jackson Avenue, Long Island
City, Queens

Through April 1

"Nobody Sees Like Us" is the emphatic title of Jeff Elrod's marvelous and elucidating little [exhibition at MoMA PS1](#). Those four words conjure a world of distinctly human possibility — of memory, pleasure and responsibility — that resonates richly, especially if you define "sees" as not just the visual act, but also as understanding.

The four paintings in Mr. Elrod's show, however, stick strictly to the visual, making the act of seeing uncommonly visceral. Measuring at least seven feet high, they depart from his characteristic off-kilter geometries, which he plots on a computer and transposes to canvas by hand. (Such works were seen in a beautiful [exhibition](#) last fall at the Journal Gallery in Williamsburg, Brooklyn.)

These newer paintings are worked up from hundreds of free-form computer drawings and printed rather than hand-painted: they present all-over surfaces of soft, smoky wafts of green, brown or gray in fuzzy, camouflagelike patterns that staunchly refuse to come into focus. Installed one to a wall in a small, pristinely white gallery, they form a unified environment notable for its visual crossfire.

The motifs are a bit like moiré patterns without the lines, and make the eyes tingle, as if Mr. Elrod wanted people to experience sight in its most basic, physical terms. Some might say they parody what Clement Greenberg called the visual "presence" of great paintings; presence here is almost automatic, an unavoidable fact — thrilling in the way roller coaster rides are.

The text accompanying the show notes that Mr. Elrod was inspired by Brion Gysin's [Dream Machine](#), a small chamber in which oscillating light frequencies were to be experienced with the eyes closed, as patterns on the eyelids. This makes sense, as does seeing them as last-minute, loose-limbed additions to the history of Op Art.

A version of this review appeared in print on March 8, 2013, on page C27 of the New York edition with the headline: Jeff Elrod: 'Nobody Sees Like Us'.