

## Los Angeles Times

### Review: Bernard Piffaretti's playful nonchalance draws you in



Bernard Piffaretti, "Untitled," 2012, acrylic on canvas. (From the artist and Cherry and Martin)

By DAVID PAGEL FEB. 11, 2013 | 12 AM

Bernard Piffaretti starts just about every painting the same way: by painting a narrow stripe down the middle of the canvas.

Then he uses big brushes and watered-down acrylics to fill in one-half of the canvas with an abstract composition, mostly lines and rectangles, but some circles and triangles. Then he does the same thing again, copying what he has done on the other half.

The results are far more fascinating than they sound. The French painter's first solo show in Los Angeles, at Cherry and Martin and organized by artist Matt Connors, introduces viewers to a pleasure-seeking sensualist who doesn't let rules get in the way of a little mystery.

Knowing how Piffaretti makes his paintings takes nothing away from their casual mastery and easy verve. In fact, the more you know about his curious diptychs, the more intriguing, even wondrous, they become.

The simple system Piffaretti works within provides just the right balance between improvisation and habit, or more poignantly, making things up as one goes along and doing the same thing over and over again. Each of his canvases enacts a drama of starting fresh and starting over, with no discernible difference between the two activities.

A light-handed master of that certain *je ne sais quoi* that makes art more captivating than the sum of its parts, Piffaretti looks right at home in Los Angeles, where playful nonchalance finds its way into much of the best art.