

# ARTFORUM



**Jackie Gendel, *Man Leaving the Picture*, 2010, oil on canvas over panel, 30 x 24".**

specific backstory (an Elian Gonzalez-type family melodrama? A biblical parable of punishment and renunciation? A gothic abduction tale?), which might go a way toward explaining the strangeness of Gendel's art.

Ultimately, however, in this painting, as well as in the rest of the show, figuration and narrative are left merely half-spun. We remain with only hints of stories—just enough to transmit a sense of drama and character and feeling. It's as if the artist began telling a bartender an anecdote, but then, midway, got sidetracked by the color of his eyes, or by the particular pattern of wood grain on the bar top.

In other words, the point where narrative and figuration collapse—where man, broadly conceived, does leave the picture—is exactly the point at which abstraction and gesture enter the frame. This is also where Gendel's work becomes wonderfully variable. In her riotously colorful paintings, made in oil on canvas, she nimbly switches between watery, porous sweeps of paint and doodles atop the picture plane—as loose and sure as if they were made with a Bic pen. In other instances, bone-dry brushwork

HUDSON

## Jackie Gendel

JEFF BAILEY GALLERY

127 Warren Street

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By Naomi Fry

*Man Leaving the Picture*, 2010, the first painting one encounters on entering Jackie Gendel's second solo show at this gallery, sets the tone for this gem of an exhibition. In it, a rotund man, wearing a greenish, hazmat suit-like outfit, is depicted (literally) leaving the picture plane, some sort of package tucked snugly under his arm. As he forges ahead, a ghoulish apparition of a woman emerges from the left, raising an arm as if to stop him. It seems appropriate to end this description with the word "curtain"; and indeed, what one notices initially is the work's attachment to a scene-making that requires both figuration and narrative—some sort of

## Philip Martin Gallery

alternates with shiny, generous slicks of paint in greens, pinks, and grays, or scraped clear down to the canvas patches. While the influences here range from Munch to Chagall to Kitaj, Gendel's paintings are in the end securely her own—marked by her gift for creating a world filled not just with characters, but also with the space between them.