

Art in Review

Simon Linke

*Mireille Mosler Ltd.
35 East 67th Street, Manhattan
Through Oct. 25*

Twenty years ago, the Australian-born artist Simon Linke made a name for himself with his carefully hand-painted copies of Artforum magazine ads for exhibitions by well-known artists. With the paintings in this exhibition, only his second in New York since 1987, Mr. Linke, who lives and works in London, has resumed that project. Most of the canvases measure 10 inches square — slightly smaller than a copy of Artforum — and almost all represent ads from the magazine for famous artists, including Andy Warhol, Chris Ofili and Damien Hirst.

Mr. Linke faithfully reproduces the ad designs and typography — including the fine print — but he gives the imagery an assertive material presence by applying paint around the text as thickly as butter or cake frosting. He thus transforms the ad, a cheap, mechanical reproduction, into a sensuous, one-of-a-kind aesthetic object. Some are elegantly minimalist, like the all orange square with white block letters advertising a Tracey Emin show. Some are more complicated, like one reproducing a portrait drawing of a woman by R. Crumb.

It is interesting to consider that economic conditions today are similar to what they were in the 1980s, when Mr. Linke first exhibited his ad paintings and an inflated art market was heading for correction. His implied commentary on the commercialization of art is less fresh now than it was in the heyday of Neo-Geo and Simulationism, but his new paintings still occasion meditation on the sacred and profane values of art. KEN JOHNSON