

Carrie Moyer
DC Moore

The Hall of Minerals at the American Museum of Natural History in New York is a kind of subterranean romper room: Frayed carpet covers the steps, platforms, and walls of the darkened spaces; geodes and samples of petrified wood are spotlit in circular hollows, open to touch by roaming toddlers; and the minerals are displayed in dusty backlit glass cases. In several vitrines, the specimens have started to crumble under halogen spots, and a rail of poser has left its trace against the back of the display. The exhibition is mysterious, absorbing, and intimate. Standing before the fourteen new paintings in “Sirens,” Carrie Moyers recent solo show art DC Moore, I was transported to this curio us place, my favorite at the Museum of Natural History.



Carrie Moyer, *The Green Lantern*, 2015, acrylic and glitter on canvas, 72 x 60”.

Since the early 2000s, Moyer has been making paintings with stains and pours that evoke —as we are often reminded— of female painters from Georgia O’Keeffe and Helen Frankenthaler to Elizabeth Murray. But the recent works also conjured the flaking of the rocks; her glitter made the canvas shimmer like crystals; and her bits of unprimed canvas served as a light source form behind. Most reminiscent of the Natural History’s display, however, was the way in which the acrylics bust form the center of darkened surrounds—often black, sometimes a Klein blue or deep maroon. In *The Green Lantern*, 2015, a group of hard –edge curves have moved to the canvas’s periphery as if to avoid the sickly mustard-and-green emanation at its center, who’s flaccid but sparkling rays droop form the titular character’s ring. Yet the

separation between the poured and pooled acrylic, with its streaks and bubbles, and the crisp, flat shapes that surround it is never complete. Veins in the bright orange curve along the canvas’s lower edge, where it ducks beneath a baby-blue pour, mirror the drips at the painting’s center, interlocking the brushless marks with those of Moyer’s own hand.

Candy Cap, 2016, too, plays fast and loose with distinctions between the background and foreground, layering visceral yellow ooze with tentacles of burnt orange and bands of pea green. As in many other works by Moyer, the title tips the piece from biomorphic abstraction to something more concrete—this time the sweet mushroom with its rounded form and orange head—but it never forecloses other readings. The white negative space set within a field of green indisputably describes the profile of a mushroom, but it could just as easily define a human head, the cranial shape’s bright coiffure of oversaturated colors serving a variegated “candy cap.” Moyer’s enchanting play of contradictions insists that abstraction and figuration, foregrounds and background, painting and design, instantaneity and narrative be alternately conflated and upheld. But it is perhaps in the powerful confrontation of the matte surface of the Flashe and the sheen of the poured paint and flitter that Moyer is fiercest. This is particularly evident in *Belvedere*, 2016, in which flat blue arches intersect with amoebic blobs of white glitter and glistening green streams. That juxtaposition is one of many in Moyer’s strange worlds of slightly outdated palettes and slightly wayward forms that illuminate our own darkened spaces with arresting beauty.

—*Rachel Churner*