

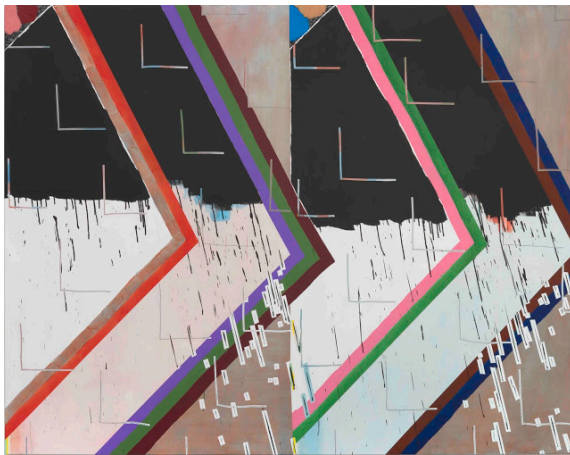
Butler, Sharon. "Miracle on 24th Street: Allison Miller, Odili Donald Odita, Cary Smith," *Two Coats of Paint*, 23 December 2015.

SHARON BUTLER TWO COATS OF PAINT

Miracle on 24th Street: Allison Miller, Odili Donald Odita, Cary Smith

Contributed by [Jonathan Stevenson](#) / For all the fine work to be found in New York galleries, even in Chelsea it's rare to encounter three distinct and extraordinarily fine painting exhibitions within a half-block span on a single side of a street. But three such shows now grace the south side of West 24th Street between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues: Allison Miller at Susan Inglett, Odili Donald Odita at Jack Shainman, and Cary Smith at Fredericks & Freiser.

Los Angeles-based painter Allison Miller's show "[Speeds](#)," at Susan Inglett Gallery, offers engaging new work in the casualist mode, authoritatively executed. She is acutely attuned to the instability of painting that stems from its inexorable visual ambiguity. The tremors increase when – to take just two of most resonant of the accompanying essay's abundant examples – "pattern pathologically finds itself in the process of falling apart or coming together" and "so-called abstraction and faulty geometries accumulate figurative reference."



Arch and Scratch Arch).

Thus, in Miller's slyly awkward *Sound*, sloppy arrows linearly arrayed in vivid colors slash and burn through a vaguely digitalized black-and-white picture plane. This, sardonically, is noise as the harsh, ragged decay of silence. In a broadly similar vein, Miller in *Snare* illuminates the predatory and potentially dangerous nature of the persistent or iterative aspects of life and art (echoing, with greater subtlety, the motif of her wryly gothic 2013 painting *Repeater*). In the Burresque *Front*, she seems to note the hidden flaws that gnaw at outward beauty. And through *Vault* she riffs on the need to escape these and other worldly banes by finding a psychic bolthole (see also *Flush*

If Miller's work is fearlessly abrasive, Odili Donald Odita's paintings – on view in "[The Velocity of Change](#)" at Jack Shainman Gallery – are deceptively accommodating. The shapes in his acrylic hard-edge geometric abstractions are neat, their colors beautiful and harmonious, their juxtapositions perfectly contiguous. But he too is interested in outpacing strictures even while acknowledging them, though the ones he has in mind are cultural and political as well as aesthetic. Born in Nigeria and based in Philadelphia, Odita sees color itself in opposition to the convention of whiteness. At the same time, he seeks to "escape ... definitions that limit and paralyze" rather than directly challenging them.

Smith's, Miller's, and Odita's exhibitions showcase painters in firm control of myriad influences and considerations, at the height of their efficacy.