

ART & DESIGN

Kristen Schiele: ‘Spirit Girls’

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Art in Review

By **MARTHA SCHWENDENER**

Kristen Schiele’s works are bright, eye-catching, cleverly constructed — and share many characteristics with shows nearby. Like Lisa Beck, at 33 Orchard, and Rachel Garrard, at Klemens Gasser & Tanja Grunert, Ms. Schiele borrows visual motifs from spiritual traditions that became fodder for New Age kitsch. Lines and stars radiate from the centers of her paintings and prints; several, including an installation of rectilinear sticks on the wall, offer Navajo patterns, which are popular now.

Like Ms. Beck and numerous painters at the moment, Ms. Schiele arranges her canvases into tight, asymmetrical configurations, almost like flow charts or display diagrams. “Heavy Metal” and “Die for a Kiss” (both from 2014) follow this design, while “Columbo Pool” is a lozenge-shaped panel (a square turned 45 degrees) — a canvas orientation forever associated with Piet Mondrian, who also championed the spiritual effects of painting.

Ms. Schiele uses washed-out, manipulated photographs in her works that have indubitably cool references: German B movies, biker magazines or graffiti near her studio in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. (The washed-out photo aesthetic also appears in nearby shows, like Ian Tweedy at Untitled.) It is not meant as criticism to say that Ms. Schiele’s work can so easily be compared to that of other artists. Painting is nearly always a communal activity, a

conversation ruled by influence, exchange and repurposing. Still, Ms. Schiele is channeling so much that is popular right now that she risks making it look like a branding exercise rather than her own quasi-authentic vision.

KRISTEN SCHIELE

‘Spirit Girls’

Lu Magnus

55 Hester Street, between Ludlow and Essex Streets, Lower East Side

Through Sunday

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