

ARTFORUM

CRITICS' PICKS

Tamar Halpern

D'AMELIO TERRAS

525 West 22nd Street, Ground Floor

April 17–June 19

Pinned to the wall like street posters, the five large-scale works on paper in Tamar Halpern's solo exhibition look like impossible monoprints. Halpern deftly employs a range of digital and physical effects here that leave a melee of marks. Due to these manipulations, figure, ground, and image are indiscernible from one another. Her process obfuscates the viewer from reading her works as a unified whole—indeed, these pieces insist on the fragmentary and in-between. Segments surprisingly arise, as in *Broken English* (all works 2010), wherein white streaks, text, and psychedelic discoloration interrupt a series of apartment windows. Elsewhere, scattered white dots, as if from a three-hole punch, hover on the surface.

Overall, the strength of Halpern's output stems from its unusually dissonant registers. Yet a work such as *Next One Is Real* is so muddled by streaks and ink marks that nothing identifiable appears. Halpern's strategy calls attention to the pleasure exacted from messing with an image and the mystery cast when information is removed through tearing, cropping, and rearranging. The installation invites a visual enjambment of textures, and the remnants of images slow the gaze of the viewer. While the success of Halpern's latest work hinges on a construction of chaos, this contingency could threaten to self-destruct.



Tamar Halpern, *Broken English*, 2010, ultrachrome ink and silk-screen ink on paper, 70 x 51".

— Piper Marshall

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GALLERIES—CHELSEA

TAMAR HALPERN

The titles of Halpern's impressive works on paper, like "Never Too Late But Always Too Early," reflect her formal approach, which is full of ruptures and switchbacks. Conflations of painting, printing, and photography, the pieces are the louche heirs to Rauschenberg, Warhol, and Christopher Wool. The show's press release, written by Richard Hell, claims that Halpern founded the Howists, a movement that contends all pieces of art already exist and only require a "physical means for revealing them most truly and effectively." The Howists are, it turns out, a complete fiction—a lie that tells the truth, like Halpern's own conjuring act. Through June 19. (D'Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St. 212-352-9460.)