

Depth/Flatness: Surface Tension at MASS Gallery

March 30th, 2013 – [Katie Geha](#)

Surface Tension, the current show at MASS Gallery, is a quiet and considered study of the work of three artists [Brooke Berger, Jarrod Beck, Anna Krachey]. The photography and paper works on display relate to concerns that are most often relegated to the tradition of painting—the interplay between depth and flatness, the materiality of the medium, and the line between abstraction and figuration. [article abridged]



Sonya Berg, “From Wild Basin 2,” (24” x 18”) oil on photograph on panel, 2013

It’s strange that the curators of *Surface Tension* don’t include any painting in the show, as if they are denying the historical lineage of the argument between flatness and depth.

Sonya Berg, currently exhibiting an impressive new body of work at Tiny Park Gallery, would have been an excellent addition to the MASS show. Previously, Berg used photography as source material, making paintings with lush blocks of green and blue to indicate, among other things, swimming pools. In this exhibition, Berg elides her process, creating photographic collages and suturing the cut lines with daubs of paint. The

result is something between painting and photography. The works are so well constructed, it’s hard to tell where one medium begins and the other ends. It is, perhaps, this ambiguity of the material properties of the work of art where *Surface Tension* is lacking. More tension, less surface.