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REBECCA HORN

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Zurich

This show--on view through January--includes several recent examples of the powerfully surreal mechanical sculptures and painting machines that German artist Rebecca Horn has been making since the early 1970s. In the exquisite *Halbmond des Papageis* (Halfmoon of the Parrots), wall-mounted brass gearworks set in motion parrot feathers that fan out at a regal pace and then retract into a sleek sheath-like tightness. Similarly, the blue-lacquered butterflies of *Schmetterlings Skulpturen* (Butterfly Sculptures) are elegant apparatuses, their glistening wings fluttering with hypnotic regularity. Horn's sculptures using round mirrors are almost equally effective, their rotations creating an entrancing cycle of shapes, shadows, and reflected images.

Such pieces at first overwhelm a series of fiery small-format drawings and gouaches in bright yellow and ochre tones--their palette presumably reflecting their creation in Horn's hideaway in Spain. Essentially abstract, most combine the light-handedness of quick sketches with the swirling energy of tango dancers and tornadoes. Others evoke a sun-drenched tannery, combining radiant tones with bony curvatures and pelt-like shapes.

The least resonant works here are large canvases, each with a jutting stone affixed to its surface. Installed next to a canvas, a paintbrush swings mechanically on a pivot; at the low end of its arc, it nears a small bowl. In Horn's studio, according to the gallery, the brush swung once from the paint-filled bowl to strike against the rock, splashing the canvas with marks from which the artist drew inspiration for the rest of the composition. The results are unconvincing. Although these works are clearly intended to be less sleek than Horn's mechanical devices, their brushstrokes and muddied colors are more incoherent than provocatively raw.

Marc Spiegler