



Sarah Crowner, *Continuum*, 1963, 2010, Gouache on sewn canvas, dimensions variable, Courtesy of Nicelle Beauchene Gallery.

SARAH CROWNER

ARTIST TO WATCH

At a brief glance, one might be forgiven for mistaking the paintings of Brooklyn-based artist Sarah Crowner for those of another era. It is true her flat, geometric canvases are reminiscent of a time long gone, one belonging to Suprematist and Constructivist painters like Malevich. Her works also seem to recall the hard-edged abstraction widely popularized in the 1950s and 1960s; what makes Crowner so special is this relationship to the past. Crowner is a master of aesthetic contemplation, given to exploring and re-digesting the formal motifs of those who have come before her. A recent work, *Continuum*, was included in the 2010 Whitney Biennial. This series was inspired by a work of the same name by British artist Bridget Riley. Rather than reproduce the lesser-known artist's work, *Continuum* served as both inspiration and template. It is a rare feat to reflect thoroughly and thoughtfully upon the past, while staying contemporary. That her works are often tributes to female artistic accomplishment is fitting. Her paintings are both inherently monumental and feminine.

The artist makes her paintings by sewing together geometric pieces of painted canvas. Her abstract compositions are insightful and carefully constructed with the formal consideration of a master painter. Here too are allusions to patchwork and domestic labor. The resulting tension between “high” and “low” art breathes new life into a familiar trope of modernism. Crowner's paintings are both overtly personal and historical. The resulting effect is one of both substance and rare approachability.

Since her selection for the Biennial, Crowner has received critical attention in publications ranging from the *Village Voice* to *The Huffington Post*. The artist is represented by Nicelle Beauchene Gallery in New York, where she has a solo exhibition scheduled for 2011. She also has upcoming shows at Catherine Bastide (Brussels) and Helena Papadopoulos (Athens). —HH