

reviews: international

Mie Olise Kjaergaard

Alexia Goethe
London

Of late, crumbling Modernist architecture has popped up in contemporary painting as a metaphor for aging utopian ideals. Mie Olise Kjaergaard has chosen a rougher, more brutal, and more romantic approach to the built environment, focusing on aging industrial ruins such as quarry towers and sawmills. She mines them for their conspicuous melancholy with thick, sloppy swaths of acrylic paint.

The works here centered on an exceptionally desolate and derelict place called Pyramiden, a onetime Russian mining settlement in the Arctic that in 2000 was emptied of people and handed over to nature. *Zinkmine* (2007) features the largely intact edifice of a watchtower. The building's identity, however, seems to dissolve. Using drippy, wide brushstrokes of blue, various browns, gray, and black-dominant colors, Kjaergaard conveys a dynamic process in which one form sags and rots into something altogether new.

Accompanying the paintings was a large and ramshackle installation titled *Structure Corner* (2007), which housed a digital display of photographs from Pyramiden. Kjaergaard, who has a master's in architecture, here created the impression of a splintered wooden shelter found in a shantytown. The building is interesting enough as an antiarchitecture statement, but it adds little to the stronger, more original interpretations in paint on canvas. —*Pernilla Holmes*



Mie Olise Kjaergaard, *No Floors* (diptych), 2008, acrylic on canvas, 75" x 134". Alexia Goethe.