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Sharon Horvath

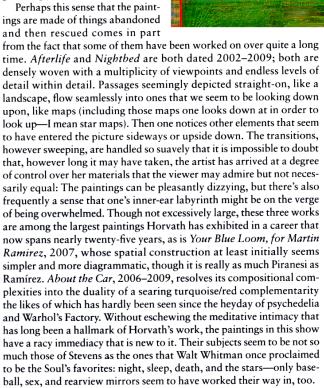
LORI BOOKSTEIN FINE ART

I'm always happy for an excuse to go back to my Wallace Stevens. So when I noticed that Sharon Horvath titled her recent show "Parts of a World" after the poet's wartime collection, the book immediately opened. And why not? Horvath is, in fact, a literary painter, though not in the sense of being an illustrator. While there is often a hint of the glorious preciousness of medieval manuscript illumination or the dreamlike intensity of Maurice Sendak in her style, there is no text that guides the making of the paintings. And yet there is a kind of ensuing text, one that coalesces in the mind of the viewer who notices that he or she is not only a viewer but also a sort of reader, since Horvath paints both images and signs, and the difference between them can become very elusive. So I shouldn't have been surprised that my walk

Sharon Horvath, Afterlife, 2002-2009, dispersed pigment. polymer, and collage on canvas, 68 x 76'

through Stevens's book furnished no direct clues to Horvath's new paintings, unless it be the sobering observation that "the dump is full / Of images," which puts me in mind of the darkly glimmering surfaces of some of the paintings, surfaces worked up by some process known best to herself-dispersed pigment, ink, and polymer on canvas (or on paper mounted on canvas)—as if some smudges and soot had been wiped clean on a scavenger's sleeve to reveal the gleaming jewels underneath.

Perhaps this sense that the paintings are made of things abandoned and then rescued comes in part



—Barry Schwabsky