

Hioe, Brian. "Critics' Pick: Ilse D'Hollander." *Artforum*. October 18, 2019.

ARTFORUM



Ilse D'Hollander, Untitled, 1996, oil on canvas, 26 3/4 x 18 7/8"

TAIPEI

Ilse D'Hollander

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Ilse D'Hollander's first solo exhibition in Asia consists of thirteen small-scale oil paintings and eight even smaller gouache-on-paper works. Nine of the canvases were made in 1996, D'Hollander's most productive year, the last before her tragic suicide at age twenty-eight. As with much of this Belgian artist's humble oeuvre, everything on display is Untitled.

Throughout this show, rudimentary, harmonious shapes meld with a low-key palette to loosen the possibilities of two-dimensional space. Three gouache paintings from 1994 depict pastoral

landscapes seen from above, abstracted into patches of greens, browns, and reds intersected by lines—presumably roads. Oils from 1996 and 1995 seem to offer outside glimpses through a window, with both the interior and exterior rendered as color fields, while in a third, the view is simplified into overlapping blobs. The remaining surfaces abandon representation completely, a 1996 work proving a particular standout: In it, a gray prism floats in a powder-blue background above its shadowy double, while between them a tinted swatch sinks into its surroundings—it all resembles a Rothko slowly coming undone. Two gouache works from 1994 are complementary, with one's muted exuberance proving a counterbalance to the formal heft of its twin. D'Hollander's gift lies in her delicate approach to modernism: playful but not lighthearted, confident but never coldly authoritative. While her ephemeral landscapes and atmospheres appear unassuming, even self-effacing, they always yield a powerful if indeterminate emotional resonance, lingering in the memory long after viewing.