

FRIEZE

James Little's Constructed Abstractions

At Kavi Gupta, Chicago, James Little debuts meditative paintings that are about their own making



Installation view, *James Little, Black Stars & White Paintings*, 2022.
Kavi Gupta | Elizabeth St. Fl. 1. Credit: Kyle Flubacker.

BY DMITRY SAMAROV, NOVEMBER 29, 2022

Abstractionist James Little debuts two sets of paintings from an ongoing thematic series at Kavi Gupta's ominous black cube building in Chicago's always-under-construction Fulton Market district. I mention the location of the exhibit because Little's use of pattern and careful manufacture in 'Black Stars and White Paintings' reflects the construction techniques and industrial materials readily apparent in the surrounding streets. This is art about its own making.

Following the tradition of many non-objective painters, Little insists that he's uninterested in narrative content: 'The art world is overloaded with rhetoric and jargon.

Just stop and put it on the wall and let's see what happens,' Little is quoted as saying on the gallery website. 'If it performs, it performs. If it doesn't, it doesn't.' But, while naming a painting comprised of two alternating black shades of oil and wax paint forming a symmetrical geometric shape Fat Star (all works 2022) is not a didactic declaration of meaning, neither is it noncommittal. At the very least, Little has a dry sense of humour.

Though true, of course, of all painting, Little's four 'Black Star' canvases – each a little under two square metres – benefit from close communion: he has reduced