

EDWARD THORP GALLERY
Press Release

ARTFORUM

New York

Sigrid Sandström

EDWARD THORP GALLERY
210 Eleventh Avenue, Sixth Floor
November 30–January 12



Untitled, 2007, acrylic on board, 60 x 84"

John Ruskin's homage to the "craggy foregrounds and purple distances" of nineteenth-century landscape painting comes to mind on viewing artist Sigrid Sandström's New York solo debut. Following the romantic impulse to capture the dusky, murky mystery of northern-European scenery, these lovely acrylic paintings employ a palette of grays, whites, and blues (with abrupt, gorgeous flashes of maroon, yellow, red, and orange) and depict fantastical scenes of misty glaciers, foggy mountain peaks, and bleak white ice floes with all the grandeur of a present-day Caspar David Friedrich. But Sandström also grapples here with painting's essential difficulty in the face of the sublime. As the works consistently teeter on the verge of abstraction, the interplay between a more traditional naturalism and geometric fragmentation provides a salient tension. Stately peaks occupying the upper half of one painting shatter into shards of white and blue, while elsewhere, an avalanche becomes as choppy and angular as scraps of discarded paper. Indeed, the most intriguing paintings in the show are those in which nature's disintegration becomes indistinguishable from the chaos of the artist's workspace. When canvases of landscapes make a sudden appearance, as in a *mise en abyme*, within a work's larger depiction of mountainous scenery, or when slate-gray earth, littered with rocks and glaciers, merges seamlessly into a painter's messy studio floor, Sandström's work boldly suggests that the moment at which landscape is deconstructed is also that in which art is created.

—Naomi Fry