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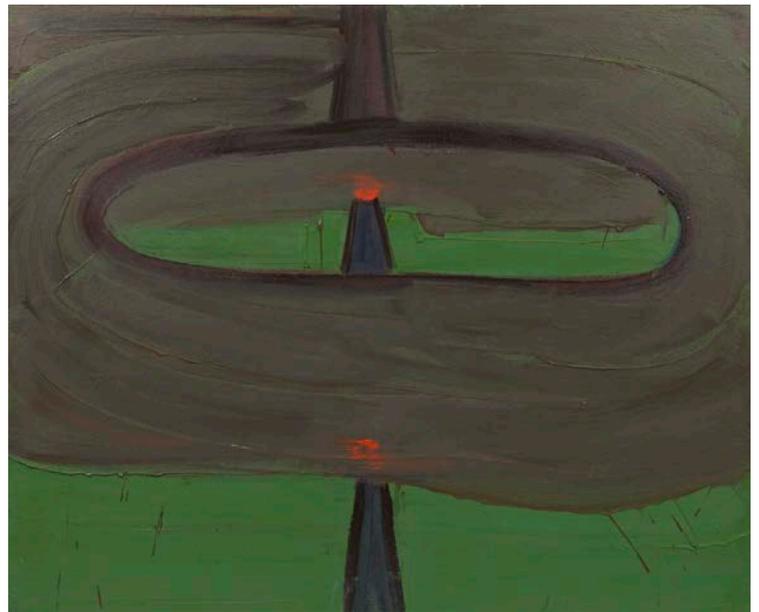
ART IN REVIEW

Robert Bordo: Three Point Turn

By ROBERTA SMITH

Alexander and Bonin
132 10th Avenue, near 18th Street, Chelsea
Through April 27

"Three Point Turn," the title of Robert Bordo's outstanding exhibition, may refer to the way several of the best paintings here explore his usual themes of flatness and depth by conflating the picture plane with the windshield of a car, often seen on rainy nights. In images of active windshield wipers or lozenge-shaped rearview mirrors, Mr. Bordo creates blurred transparencies and fractured spaces. Center lines break and red lights multiply for an effect that is deliciously and darkly comic, but also abstract and rather ham-handedly beautiful. The thick paint and wet-on-wet-flamboyance of Mr. Bordo's paint handling helps, as do titles like "DWI" or "(wacko)." Viewers are cast as timid drivers in rough weather or drunks about to crash.



Robert Bordo's "DWI," a work that conflates the picture plane with the windshield of a car, seen on a rainy night.

In other works, a pile of dirt — or possibly something more putrid — is the main motif and the art world the presumed target. In "Studio" the pile has a shovel. In "Homage" it has a crown. In "Mogul" it is extra-large and on its own. More nuanced is "The Strange Meeting," in which the brown pile turns porous and is flecked with orange, perhaps gems.

The show's title may also refer to the way that Mr. Bordo, now in his early 60s, has assiduously amplified his art in several directions over the last decade or so, enlarging his canvases, working more loosely with larger, more loaded brushes. He still makes the smaller more delicate works for which he became known in the late 1980s, as evidenced by a display in an upstairs gallery. With meaning suspended between painterly fact and pictorial ambiguity, his expanded repertory points to a very interesting future.