

REGEN PROJECTS

Brumer, Andy. "Rebecca Morris, '#34'." [Visual Art Source](#) (September 22, 2025) [online]



Visual Art Source

Rebecca Morris, "#34"

Updated: Sep 24

by Andy Brumer

[Regen Projects](#), Los Angeles, California

Continuing through October 25, 2025



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[Editor's Note: Brumer and his family joined thousands of victims of the Altadena fire in January. The recovery of some semblance of normal life has been a shared struggle in the months since. Mr. Brumer's review of Rebecca Morris' exhibition lends testimony to our resiliency and also to the fundamental importance of visual art to human experience and the discourse that takes place in that special, I dare say privileged realm of existence. So welcome back Andy, we hope it's the beginning of a new start for you.]

L.A.-based artist Rebecca Morris has titled this exhibition "#34," a number that marks that many one-person shows over the course of her 30-year painting career. Such a numerical title might serve to discourage us from devising pat, discursively based associations with the paintings. Such a prosaic interpretation of Morris' paintings could only stifle their spatial life source and protean power. Propelled by the imagination alone, these abstract works aim at the heart and the psyche. This is in part due to the playfulness of the images. Add the organic tensions that blossom into fully felt forms; it's an interesting mix.



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Morris is associated with Casualism, a 21st-century trend that uses bold color schemes in (often) unbalanced compositions that challenge conventional notions of finished or “beautiful” art. The work here, however, is anything but casually wrought. Her canvases display their own coherent musculature united ironically through clunky components. Yet the canvasses never fail to resolve themselves into soft, graceful compositions that both challenge and please the eye.

A musical analogy might link Morris’ visual improvisations with the seductive off-kilter piano playing of the legendary jazz musician Thelonius Monk, while poetry lovers could associate Morris’ quilt-like stitching together of uneven fragmented sectionals to the lapidary shavings and palimpsest-like erasures of Robert Creeley’s poems.

Morris has stated her preference to work on several paintings at the same time, laying each flat out on the studio floor. As each work evolves, she notes and nurses one painting’s influence upon or bleeding into another. Morris has also stated that she chose sizes that she felt took advantage of each sun-lit gallery wall in mind. The show turns the entire exhibition space into a glimmering architectural jewel box.



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The often awkwardly shaped components of each painting push and pull at each other in different directions with a kinetic energy suggestive of living organisms, of the random swirling of stormy weather, of a ballet dancer's leaps and catches, or of the unscripted sprints, tackles, throws and tumbles of a football game.

"Untitled (#06-25)" centers a large silver egg shape, filled as if a snow globe with cell-like splotches surrounded by pieces of cell-shaped units intent on fertilizing it. Other works point to more geologic and cosmic-zodiacal spaces. "Untitled (#04-25)" is laced with gold-leafed paint built up into impasto lines and then layered in a broken grid, itself layered over a night-black backdrop that is populated in turn with white cloud-like puffs and a grayish, nebula-like film. The scheme playfully connects the sections of the work into fanciful "constellations", while the gold leaf (and silver leaf paint elsewhere) spiritualizes the painting as if it were a Medieval or Renaissance altarpiece.



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Crafty and soft, calming and child-like, yet also opulent, sharp and sophisticated, Morris' work resonates with a very mature sense of animated joy. Many of the small squares and rectangular sections painted within the artist's larger canvases serve as compact proscenium-like stages upon which fancifully masked inhuman characters vigorously converse and dance. Like pieces of large jigsaw puzzles struggling to coalesce into pictorial wholeness, Morris' pictorial elements subversively pull themselves further apart in explosive fissions that embrace and honor the ongoing frisson of life.