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KILLER TEXT ON ART

## IVA GUEORGUIEVA

ACME. / Los Angeles

by Ezrha Jean Black

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The title of Iva Gueorguieva's show "Spill/Frame" seemed almost a naked admission of its strategies and ambition with a concomitant risk of crashing, careening failure. In almost all of the works on view there was both a willful, self-imposed notion of the edge or, especially as elaborated in the relief-constructions, the frame, the box, the armature, machinery, as well as the sense of a flow, falling away or threatened breach of that frame or edge. In the context of this expansive show, the constructions (three in all) seemed compressed vessels of the exploded array of objects, incidents and machinery—"real life" referents—"framed" by the collage-paintings (six, including one from 2011, the largest on linen or canvas, with one on paper). What in its totality might appear a galvanic fury of lines, notional designs or geometric configurations, revealed a precise choreography of separately painted collaged segments of canvas or linen, slotted into the "machinery." There should be no confusing it with gestural abstraction. This is really a revival of Cubist (or even Futurist) conventions by other means to other ends—those ends having less to do with illusionistic space than with illusionistic time. A subject like *Man Hunt* (2013) might be expected to spill out of its frame—the painting is by far

the largest (110 x 180 inches) of the works in the show; but in fact, it's as controlled as the smallest, *Shadow Blister* (2013), the most "Cubist" in its neutral palette, which has an almost poetic elegance—a Cornell "slot machine" construction filtered through Braque. In *Man Hunt*, as elsewhere in the show, Gueorguieva's dynamic palette energizes the triptych; its modulation between a slightly acid yellow-green "zone" through a dense varicolored mid-section to a darker, steel-blue dominated section almost demarcate its segments. But the "machinery" of the painting is far more complex. Instead, structural elements, screens, cabling and circuitry—industrial flotsam—eddy and arc around a black vortex well off-center. The title of *Seated Woman: 1974* (2013) itself underscored the sense of reaching back in time. The entire composition is a kind of reversal (again Gueorguieva's palette is expressive)—with a "window" of blue in the upper left framing brown extensions (architectural or anatomical?) that descend obliquely into a larger cascade. The energy of the composition comes in downward thrusts—oblique strokes in collaged acrylic and oil-stick, a shower of brown lines, two-by-fours, jagged boxy elements in orange and putty or burnt brown and sienna amphorae—all collapsing into a blue void—an abstracted defenestration or a private sea—as if to penetrate the "mechanics" of time and movement. *Shelter* (2012) was the most "totemic" of the constructions. On a rectangular cubic construction (like the frame of an old electric sign), the artist mounted pieces of steel industrial venting (or possibly an old Jeep grille) cut like wings, amid lithographed and printed fabric that abstractly suggested architectural elements—girders, crossbars, cranes, balusters and rigging. Panels of lozenged blue fabric curled toward the rear on parabolic tubing—wing-like extensions into a dubiously sheltering sky.