

# Art in America

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## Sharon Louden at Anthony Grant

This show of Sharon Louden's paintings and sculptures demonstrated her propensity for the enigmatic gesture. Having graduated with a master's degree from Yale in 1991, Louden is better known for her drawings and sculpture, which have been exhibited extensively in the U.S., than for her paintings. The medium-size works in the series titled "The Lingerin'" were all done in 2003-04 and created with watercolor, acrylic, and gel medium on wood panel. They consist of brushstroke-like forms that accumulate in one area of otherwise blank white panels. In each work, some of the marks are made only with outlines and others are filled in with washes. Although the press materials describe the shapes as "anthropomorphic," to this viewer they are suggestive of bacilli seen through the lens of a microscope. Whatever the origins of the imagery, an interesting tension exists in reading the marks as nature-based and as purely abstract—as explorations of form, tonal values, movement and overall gestalt.

Within each painting, individual elements appear to drag themselves away from the pile-up, as if they were trying to escape. A particularly compelling grouping at the bottom left of one painting is done in a reddish sepia color. Some of the marks seem to be rising upward into the surrounding empty matter.

Louden also showed a series of sculptures, titled "Yellow Tails" (2004).

The sculptures consist of groupings of lustrous white and yellow monofilament, about 3 feet or longer in length, hanging from the ceiling. Small clusters are held together by clips and joined in bunches. Several of these larger bunches are then hung close together, their brightly colored, light-catching ends resting on the floor. Like the "The Lingerin'" paintings, simple components are combined to create complex structures that suggest biological forms. They are as enigmatic as the paintings, provoking many interpretations, symbolic or allegorical. Both series in this show are small triumphs of material being. —Jonathan Goodman

Sharon Louden: *The Lingerin'*, 2003-04, watercolor and gel medium on wood panel, 20 inches square; at Anthony Grant.

