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## Molly Zuckerman-Hartung

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### "Molly Zuckerman-Hartung" at Rowley Kennerk Gallery Chicago

She may have left her paintings untitled, but that didn't stop Molly Zuckerman-Hartung from giving her show a killer name. "She-male Guitar Solo" fits her paintings perfectly. Most of them look like they are the result of audacious and improvisational performances that respect yet tweak the tried-and-true chord progressions of (early) modern painting. She is, however, not a one-woman Paul Klee cover band. Presenting their ambiguity unapologetically and with a visual and historical clarity, Zuckerman-Hartung's paintings deftly riff on the persistent problems of exclusion and/or oppression of binary labels, be they abstraction/representation or boy/girl, in art and/or life.

In the largest, most figurative and cartoonish painting, *Untitled* (2007), a mustard-yellow woman (or drag queen) was called into service as a witness to the exhibition itself. This role made the fact that her eyes are closed all the more poignant, signaling a missed opportunity, or better yet a resolute refusal to perform. If she were to open them, she could easily be officiating a 21st-century civil ceremony for what had formerly been warring factions of painting: representational versus abstract. Even the wholly nonobjective paintings had hybrid personas, in particular the pure abstractions that resembled deep-blue fraternal twins. They wore their seemingly childlike scribbles and scratches like fantastic costume jewelry. "Molly Zuckerman-Hartung" originally appeared in the July/August 2008 issue of Modern Painters. For a complete list of articles from this issue available on ARTINFO, see Modern Painters' [July/August 2008 Table of Contents](#).

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