

# ARTNEWS

February 2015



John Miller, *Untitled*, 1987, acrylic on canvas.  
39½" x 26".

## JOHN MILLER

MELIKSETIAN BRIGGS  
LOS ANGELES  
OCTOBER 25 - DECEMBER 20

This show of five vintage paintings by John Miller was modest in size but ambitious in conceptual scope. The works were made in the 1980s while their subject matter harked back to the 1960s, as did the title of the show, "Do It Again!"—a twist on *Do It!: Scenarios of the Revolution*, Jerry Rubin's 1970 Yippie manifesto.

Two representational canvases and three abstractions recalled a time when the New York-based artist was grappling with the notion of signature styles and correspondences between seemingly disparate modes of painting. Miller credits Sherrie Levine's re-creations of famous artworks as his inspiration, but he developed his own approach to appropriation, employing it in examinations of American social, cultural, and political structures.

One painting, apparently based on a news photograph, depicts a Black Power rally, with peaceful protesters corralled by police. Another portrays two members of the Carrie Nations, a fictional rock band from the 1970 film *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*. The murky, reddish-brown abstractions are amalgamations of Abstract Expressionist gestures. But all the works are part of the same conceptual stew, offering viewers a window onto Miller's interests and methods at an early stage in his career, when his particular brand of institutional critique was taking concrete form.

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