



American artist Judith Geichman's *Untitled* (2018) entered the MCA Collection in 2019. Chicago-based artist Paul Heyer shares his thoughts on the exquisite work.

PAUL HEYER ON JUDITH GEICHMAN'S *UNTITLED*

Judith Geichman's *Untitled* (2018) is a little beast of a painting. It's imp as abstraction—seductively unreliable. Geichman has cast a layered spell that calls to mind a time when geology and humankind worked in closer collaboration, when children were groomed to become alchemists and our monuments bore closer affinity to mountains than to glass needles.

People with dyslexia often describe the letters or words as swimming around the page. There's a perversity to a letter or word that doesn't want to stay still. It's like an expensive dog

that refuses to obey a patient master. And in *Untitled* we get teased with almost-characters of a similar temperament. Do we see x's swimming up to us, suggesting some redacted truth or some red-light treat? Or are they scrawls depicting a harlequin's coat, the pattern that promises half-veiled truth?

In *Untitled* it comes down to a kind of reading that we're not used to doing in the light of day. Maybe we remember how to do it. Or maybe it just takes a different kind of looking, as with an X-ray, which the painting also resembles. X's of rays and x's of criss-crossed bones, buried beneath flesh.

Ultimately it's a painting that feels dangerous. And who doesn't crave a little bit of danger?

Judith Geichman, *Untitled*, 2018. Acrylic, enamel, and spray paint on panel, 45 x 33 1/4 in. Collection Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, gift of Katherine S. Schamberg by exchange, 2019.2. Courtesy of the artist and Regards, Chicago. Photo: Brian Griffin.