

BERLIN

SARAH MORRIS

HAMBURGER BAHNHOF

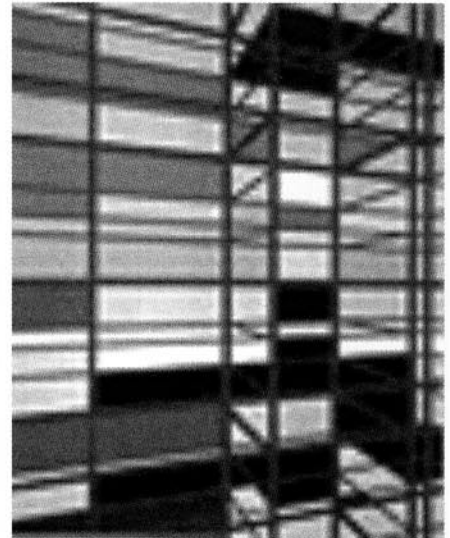
Sarah Morris's "Correspondence" exhibition in the Hamburger Bahnhof included recent paintings and her latest film, *Capital*. At first glance, Sarah Morris's large-format pictures with their glowing, precisely composed color fields are reminiscent of shimmering tower-block façades.

But recently the seductive views presented by her mix of Pop and Minimal Art have proved resistant to any kind of realistic reproduction, so it seems impossible to supply unambiguous readings for her images. Most of her titles identify existing buildings in Washington, but Sarah Morris's surfaces — aesthetically broken down into small, precise, straight-edged fields, with lines running into a void and abstract space — are actually presenting the complex visual semantics of modern city architecture. And then in her 16 minute film *Capital*, which was skilfully built into the hanging of Morris's paintings in the Hamburger Bahnhof WerkRaum, the artist records a typical day in the life of the capital of the United States. A jogger in the park, elegant men at the hairdresser's, the President's helicopter landing in Washington, Bill Clinton with his team at a meeting in the White House, a black woman sorting letters...

As in Sarah Morris's paintings, objective precision, balanced rhythm, and perfectly designed surfaces set the tone in *Capital* as well. Every edit works perfectly, every take is coherent, and a sense of latent tension makes viewers secretly hold their breath. Then there is the music, composed by Liam Gillick, which keeps the cinematic events balanced in a carefully calculated way between cool professionalism and suppressed emotion. But despite all the surface gloss, *Capital* is not just concerned with presenting a Postmodern stylization of political power. On the contrary, Sarah Morris is trying to reveal the fascination this power exerts and also the inner architecture of the way in which it is presented. Thus the supposedly affirmative features of her polished and very beautiful pictorial language become distinctly critical.

Raimar Stange

(Translated from German by Michael Robinson)



SARAH MORRIS, *L'Enfant Plaza* (detail), 2001.
Courtesy White Cube, London.
Photo Stephen White.