

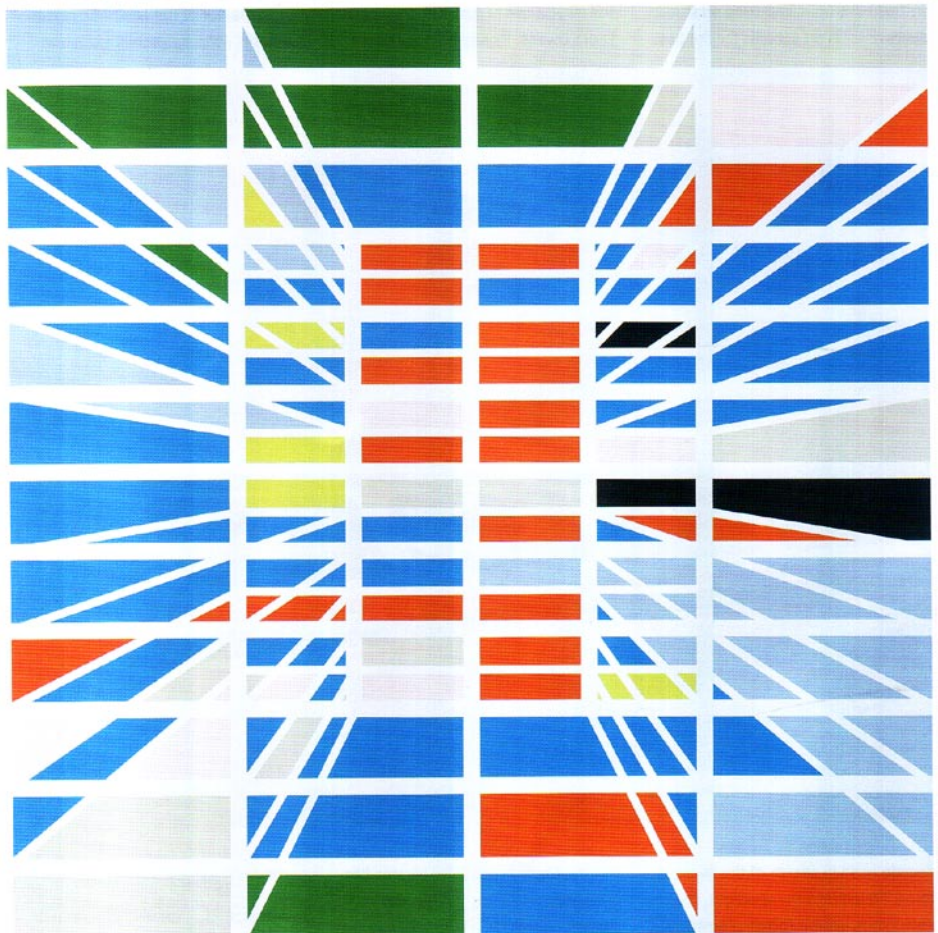
Sarah Morris

Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin

In her films *Midtown* (1998), *Las Vegas* (1999–2000) and now *Capital* (2001), Sarah Morris concentrates on how American metropolises can become self-referential cosmoses. As with the earlier films, *Capital* was shown with a series of paintings distilling its rhythm, density and colour values. Whereas the 'Midtown' series consists of slightly cropped, quiet patterns of box surfaces, and 'Las Vegas' of confusing crystalline vectors, in 'Capital' the viewer is confronted by a series of paintings that evoke mysterious, three-dimensional spaces.

As a synonym for Washington DC, *Capital* explores a cluster of motifs – wilful architectural installations, technocratic voids and the old, cumbersome political apparatuses, including conspiracy and media spectacle. In the midst of it all is the myth of the individuality of the statesperson, and the political pragmatism of the Clinton era.

The film is created from footage shot during the last months of Clinton's presidency: the Pentagon, press conferences in the White House, presidential convoys. These various images were then edited to create a terse, flowing pace complemented with scenes of professionals jogging on Capitol Hill, waiting for the subway, or racing through city tunnels in their cars. However, Morris' dense composition doesn't simply describe the panorama of daily routine. It also allegorically interweaves the 'real' with



Sarah Morris
Crystal City (Capital)
2001
Household paint
on canvas
214 x 214 cm

allusions to the history of art and cinema. Although the artist attempts to neutralize revelation in her films, in this latest work an atmosphere of political conspiracy hovers just below the surface. It's a quality that lends *Capital* a touch of cinematic drama. The trance-like, repetitive struc-

For 'Capital' Morris created a series of paintings that evoke mysterious, three-dimensional spaces.

ture of the electronic soundtrack, composed by Liam Gillick, supports this tug of war between impartiality and sug-

gestion. The sound of it filtered through the gallery where Morris' 16 'Capital' paintings were elegantly hung.