

M A R G A R E T
T H A T C H E R
P R O J E C T S

Art Letter

By Paul Klein
February 10, 2005

Every time I walk out the door and go visit galleries I find something I like, but as I was explaining to my son this afternoon, meaningful experiences don't always have to be positive - just real.



Vadim Katznelson, 2005

Two of my favorite artists have exhibits opening Friday night at Roy Boyd Gallery. I've known John Fraser ever since I came to Chicago in 1981. He makes gorgeous minimal work and his new works are breakthrough gorgeous. I am thrilled to see these new pieces. They are subtle, radiant gems. The distance he has traveled and the dedication he manifests are significant. When I first knew John he was a financially successful "artist" who exhibited in street art fairs, like the the Gold Coast or Wells Street Art Fairs. He wasn't satisfied with just making money; he wanted to make art so he dropped out of that scene and went to art school. Of course he was good, but for years his cash flow didn't come close to when he was aiming lower. And that never slowed him down. His work has long been about the quiet parts of books, the end pages, the parts we don't much pay attention to. His work is calm and passionate and the new ones meld his interest in books with his passion for wood. This work isn't for everyone. To appreciate it one needs to slow down and really look, and when we do John's art really gives back. They are a treat. Give them a moment and see if I'm not right.

Upstairs at Boyd my friend **Vadim Katznelson** is stumping me again with a body of work that is magic in its creation. This work fascinates me. He makes paint look like a skein of yarn's endpieces, and despite our friendship he won't tell me how they are done. I've learned a lot about Vadim from playing poker with him and in case you are curious there is a oneness about his art and his poker: he plays both thoroughly and methodically. Raised in Russia until he was 13, Vadim is a product of both cultures. His art gives a lot, but really reveals itself over time as we decipher the myriad layers of method and content he loads into his pieces.