

January 2005

## Katherine Bowling

Greenberg Van Doren

In this show, "Divide," each of Katherine Bowling's recent paintings of trees, field, and sky was disrupted by a dirt path, a snow-covered trail, a woody lane, or a stretch of smooth, black pavement veering into the distance.

But rather than leading viewers into the pictorial space, Bowling's thoroughfares separated or distanced onlookers from the bucolic vistas spread before them. In *Shade*, for instance, a highway cuts into a swath of tree-studded meadow by way of the lower left corner of the wood-panel painting, leaving us armchair travelers stranded on a grassy shoulder. The feeling of being off-kilter was reinforced by a greenish yellow tint that rinses the scene, making it appear as if we were



Katherine Bowling, *Leaf*, 2004, oil on spackle on wood, 48" x 36". Greenberg Van Doren.

viewing it through sunglasses or a camera lens.

Among the most seductive works, despite its refusal to allow for a direct point of entry, was *Petal*. Here the yellow line that marks a road's edge separates viewers from an orchard of flowering trees, poised like a chorus of dancers in pink tutus behind a tall tree suggesting a leggy, if aging, prima ballerina.

By painting on spackled plywood, sanding it, and then applying successive layers of paint, Bowling distills the fleeting effects—long shadows, dappled sunlight, blurred skies—of a timeless subject. Her subtle blending of the literal and lyrical makes for paintings that avoid cliché while imparting the comfort of the familiar. —Deidre Stein Greben