

ARTFORUM

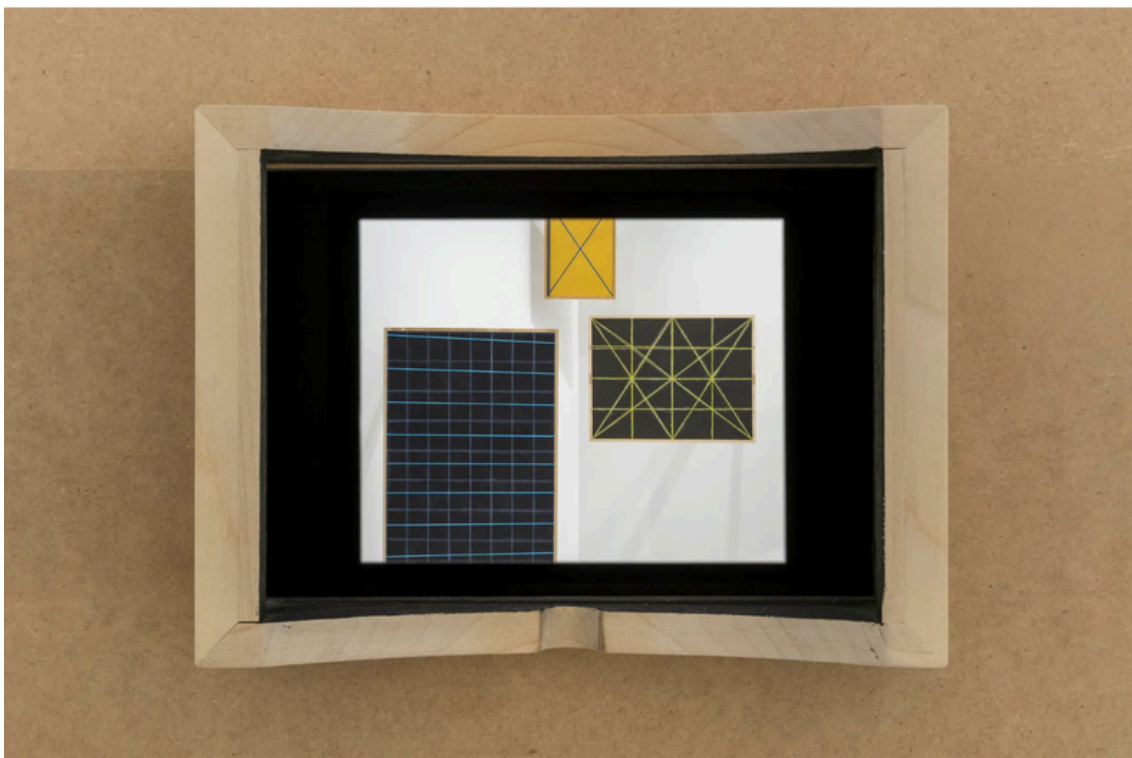
REVIEWS PARIS

Look Sharp: Matts Leiderstam Sees Painting Differently

The Swedish artist matches rigor with elegance in “The Grid and the Gaze”

Andréhn-Schiptjenko Paris

By Yuki Higashino



View of “Matts Leiderstam: The Grid and the Gaze,” 2026.

Through May 23, 2026—Matts Leiderstam is a rigorously cerebral artist with restrained visual language. Throughout his four-decade-long career, he has been interrogating the conventions of picture making; art-history writing; museological infrastructure; and presentation apparatuses, such as frames and display stands, in order to highlight the implicit power relations embedded in them. In other words, Leiderstam’s art concerns itself with the mechanism of viewing and the politics it entails. This exhibition—as its title, “The Grid and the Gaze,” would imply—is no exception.

The first work one sees on entering the gallery is an austere, if brightly colored, small abstract painting, *Panel (124)*, 2026—a yellow grid of tessellated triangles painted on a poplar panel. The way the painting faces you as you walk through the door means that it juts out, almost perpendicular to the wall, floating. In fact, it is held by a custom-made movable wooden arm. The construction evokes both the clean style of modern Scandinavian design and the wooden support attached behind historical paintings to prevent them from sagging: a construction that is crucial but normally hidden and seen only by conservators.



View of "Matts Leiderstam: The Grid and the Gaze," 2026.

The central piece of the exhibition is a room-size installation, *What Does the Grid Do? (Grand Machine)*, 2022–26. At one corner of the room hang three more grid paintings, each likewise held by a wooden arm, all angled to face the opposite corner of the room. At the other end of the room is what initially appears to be an unpainted architectural model made of MDF and wood. Then you notice a stool beside it and a viewing hole. Through the hole, and through the opening at the other end of the model, the inside of which is painted black, you can look at the three paintings, sized and angled precisely as to fit within the model's aperture. The installation also includes two studies on paper, each showing compositional analysis of paintings by Nicolas Poussin and an image of a man with a skiascope, an optical device intended to help viewers look at paintings with greater clarity and without contextual distraction.