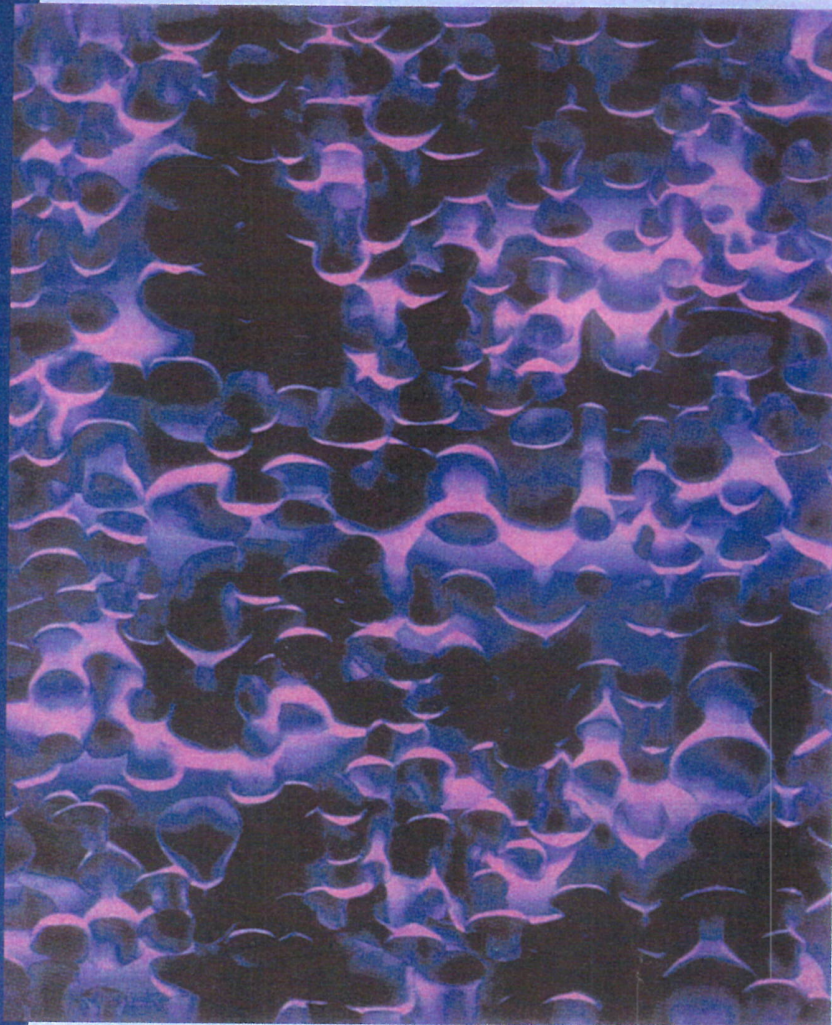
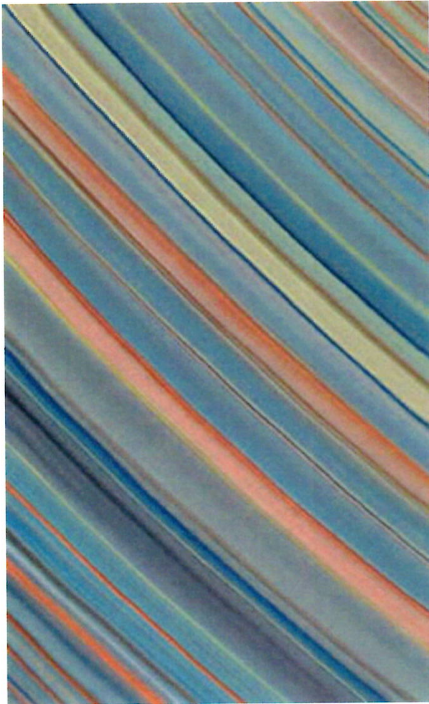


***Paintings That
Paint Themselves***
Or So It Seems



Kresge Art Museum
Michigan State University
September 7 – October 31, 2004



Bye Bye Broadway, 2002
Chris Gallagher, Born England 1954,
lives in New York City
Oil on canvas, 35 x 22 inches
Courtesy Valerie McKenzie Gallery,
New York

Introduction

There are twenty-four artists in *Paintings That Paint Themselves*, coming from many countries, though all but two live in the United States. They are reinventing painting for us once again in a host of new ways. Suddenly, young artists are excited about what the others are doing. They are visiting each others' studios, sometimes even sharing secrets. They are experimenting, researching, and learning from and about new materials. There is joy in the artist's studio as discoveries are made and ways found to speak through abstract matter. And the work is abstract – resolutely so. This is abstract expression without the handwriting, the tell-all gesture of the fifties; it is post-Minimal, post-Conceptual abstract expression – Mark Rothko without tears, Willem De Kooning's whiplash line without a woman to use it on. We were ready to be excited by abstract painting again. Luckily the artists were ready for us.

Two pioneers got the ball rolling in the seventies, but it was not part of a bigger picture then, and neither knew what the other was doing. One of them, Bernard Frize, lived in Paris,¹ the other, David Reed, in New York. Frize (born 1949) constantly explores new ways to make paintings. He changes techniques, implements, and materials with every start: special wide brushes, detail brushes, brushes clumped together, rollers with and without pattern devices; substances added to the paint that make it homogenous or that prevent the colors from mixing. Sometimes he sands down through layers of paint to bring out hidden colors, other times he removes the dried skins from cans of enamel or paint poured into tray and partly dried. The skins are applied to a blank canvas. Gravity is a frequent helper. When he applies a thick layer of wet paint to a canvas and hangs it face down above the floor "until the dripping mass of paint forms tiny stalactites – the painting paints itself."²

David Reed (born 1946) just loves to play with the liquidity of oil and alkyd paint. Unlike Frize, he doesn't invent a new way of painting every time he walks into the studio, although he sometimes uses a bunch of brushes tied together to make abrupt and dislocating scale changes within a given painting. His strokes are flattened, thinned out, yet they feel



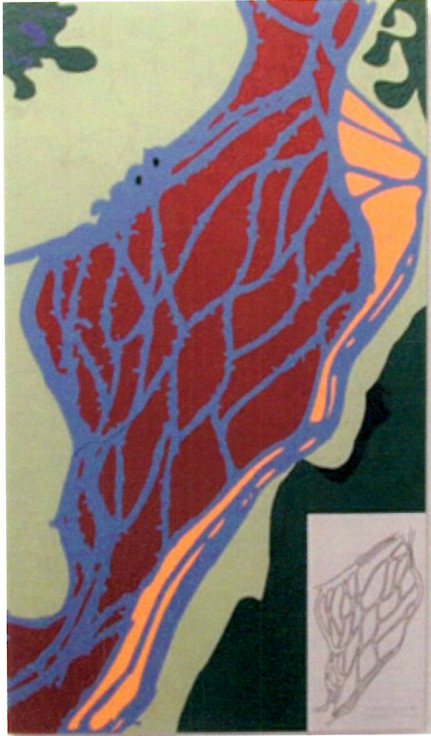
Gunmetal Tap, 2004
Jason Young, Canadian Born 1969
 Acrylic and resin on honeycomb alloy,
 58 x 46 inches
 Courtesy Cristinrose/Josée Bienvenue
 Gallery, New York

wet. Color variations can also be disturbing. It seems he likes to please as much as displease the viewer. One reviewer said Reed's paintings have a "high concept angle," they "represent abstraction."³ Writers stress the autonomy of his work, their purity, its lack of mystery, its lushness, its seductiveness and hail it as bringing back abstraction. This has been said consistently over the decades, but now, enjoying the company of others in Chelsea, in Europe, and at art fairs everywhere, it seems to have come true.

All of these artists who let their paintings "paint themselves" are drawing on the roots of abstraction in its unbounded positivism and trust in the ability of paint to make a difference in the world. Their work is geared to the eye as an organ for sensing pleasure so they create surfaces that stimulate the haptic sense in the viewer, the imagined sense of touching something wonderful. Their crafting of these paintings is a mystery and a big plus for viewers who give a painting time to work its magic in their eyes. All of this abstraction rewards long looking, each an experience in its unique way. Some are like the vast intangible landscapes you can see in your mind when you listen to contemporary electronic music; others are what you might imagine celestial light to be like – enveloping and everchanging. Imagine you are a miniscule movie camera moving through the painting space an inch at a time instead of standing back and taking a snapshot of the whole image.

The question "How was it made?" constantly pops up in front of these paintings, even the more gestural ones by Reed, David Mann, and William Wood, because the shapes have floated and swirled their way into the picture space without leaving a trace of having been handmade. Though resin is often involved, or urethane, beeswax or alkyds, many of the paintings are made of traditional oil paint, used in brand new ways. Natural forces determine the outcome for some. Gravity, temperature, drying time, chemistry, and chance are all critical factors. And, for many, there is a strong conceptual factor involving the process.

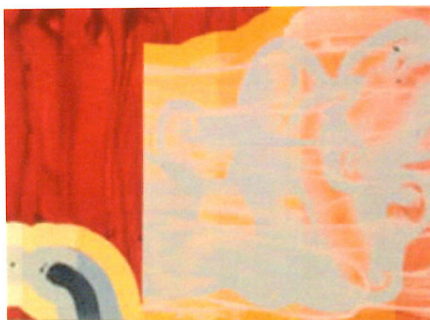
Poured paintings by Korean Moon Beom, Midwesterners Eric Dimas and Irving Zane Taran, all owe a debt to Jackson Pollock and the Color Field painters, but make the earlier work look very deliberate and "painted" by comparison. Mary McDonnell does so as well. Her paintings look as though they were scraped down to this state, but



***MultiStreams*, 2004**
John F Simon Jr., American Born 1963
 Laser-cut laminate, 48 x 28 inches
 Courtesy Sandra Gering Gallery, New York

they too are the result of multiple layerings of thinned oil paint. For James Lecce, the pourings are in seven laterally manipulated layers. Chris Gallagher and Joie Rosen who paint stripes actually hand paint the bands of color, but they seem as though they were printed on somehow. Miriam Cabessa's concentric circles are made with sure movements of the hand but you would swear they must have been made as Jeffrey Simmons does, by mechanically spinning the canvas as he applies the paint. Suzann Dunaway silk-screens bands of color onto her small, perfectly prepared surfaces in plaid patterns.

Layering and chemical interaction, both in terms of attraction and repulsion, determine the outcomes for other painters. Kimberly Squaglia applies her imagery directly to her panels in oil, but as it mixes with succeeding layers of resin, it "blooms" like biological material in a petrie dish. Eric Blum's images emerge from an unlikely fusion of watercolor and beeswax. Prudencio Irazabal uses acrylic in multiple transparent and translucent layers that result in a glassy surface through which hazy color glows. Susan Dory's imagery is very clear, but how it got there is not. Michael McCaffrey finds his images within layerings of oil-based enamel on sintra (PVC in sheet form) panels. Before your eyes glowing color images emerge as you discern the hue and temperature variances within what seemed to be a monochromatic field. Oliver Marsden builds his paintings out of many glazes and layers of acrylics in an exploration of light and its perception. Resin and acrylic pigments interact in Jason Young's monochrome or duochrome paintings producing layered viscosities and chromatic effects of great complexity beneath a slick resin skin.



David Reed
 American, born 1946
#403, 1997-98
 Oil, alkyd on solid ground, 32 x 56 inches (detail)
 Courtesy of Max Protetch Gallery, New York

Emil Lukas is essentially a conceptualist who experiments with ways to make paintings that form themselves given a set of materials and a plan to produce a pictorial result. He may squeeze walnut juice and wet Plaster of Paris between two sheets of glass, sew potato chips to canvas and let the fat make the painting, or let the paint dry under sheets of glass leaving geometric ridges on their removal. Some of the artists press a computer into service to produce their paintings. Christian Garnett silk-screens computer-generated colored oil units (usually circles) over meticulous layers of alkyd and acrylic in one complete edge-to-edge movement of pressure through the screen. Roxy Paine invented a computer-controlled machine (PMU-Painting Manufacture Unit) in 1997 for dipping canvases in

paint down to a certain point, then lifting them up to drip-dry for a few hours or days before redipping. A given canvas might take five weeks before being declared complete. John F. Simon creates Color Panels using Bauhaus color theories reinterpreted into software "rules" that generate continuously changing, never repeating color studies. The exhibition takes you on a journey from the hand-made that looks machine perfect to the machine-made that expresses human thought. What the paintings share is their beauty.



Susan Dory
American
***Modest Pant*, 2003-04**
Enamel on panel, 48 x 48 inches
Thatcher Projects, New York

Exhibition funded by the Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, Washington, D.C.

April Kingsley
Curator

1 Unfortunately we were unable to locate a painting of Frize's for the show.

2 Henriëtte Heezen, "Bernard Frize," DePont Foundation Collection. [<http://www.depont.nl/frontpage/> accessed 4/24/03]

3 David Rimaneli, "David Reed, Kunstmuseum St. Gallen," *Artforum* (September 2001), 89.



michigan council for
arts and cultural affairs



Moon Beom (Korean, born 1955)



Slow, Same, #5006, 2002
Acrylic, oilstick on panel, 78 x 60 x 3
inches
Courtesy Kim Foster Gallery, New York

Moon Beom received his BFA and MFA from the Seoul National University, but he has also had two U.S. fellowships, at the Vermont Studio School and the Millay Foundation. He represents the early postwar Korean generation faced with the challenge of combining the preservation of centuries-old Asian art traditions with a vigorous engagement of Western modernity. His response has been to adopt new materials and an abstract vocabulary, while retaining the control, craftsmanship, and formal beauty that long characterized Korean painting. As a result, his art compresses two crucial developments in 20th Century art: abstraction and conceptualism. He represented Korea at the important 2000 KwangJu Biennial.

Recently, Beom has concentrated on monochromatic tonally rich paintings like this one made of monochrome acrylics and oilstick. They evoke mysteries and philosophical reveries. Orbs float among the clouds in some, invoking the heavens. Here waterfalls and mist shrouded mountains seem relevant, or steamy hot springs in a cavern. As with traditional Korean landscapes, the elements given are meant to conjure up vast spaces in the viewer's mind, vistas into the infinite.

Eric Blum (American, born 1956)



No. 457, 2003
Watercolor, resin, beeswax on wood
panel, 23 x 23 inches
Courtesy Littlejohn Gallery, New York

Born and raised in Southern California, Eric Blum experienced something at Disneyland when he was only five that has been a lifelong influence on his artmaking – he saw an underwater implosion of some kind. His memory of watching while divers in old-fashioned full-body deep sea suits battled what seemed to be an underwater fire is dreamlike in a way that is similar to the unfocused movement of the forms in his paintings. He repeats numerous alternating layers of transparent watercolor or resin pigment and beeswax so that the imagery is sealed into the smooth surface skin. It seems to be forming before your eyes, to breathe in and hold it, waiting for something that already happened with tremendous anticipation.

After two years at the University of California, Los Angeles, Blum worked for nearly a decade before going to Saint Martin's School of Art in London for another year or so of its excellent art training. He was included in *Waxing Poetic: Encaustic Art in America*, a catalogued 1999 exhibition that was shown in Knoxville and Montclair, but his elusive and compelling portraits are also included in shows of contemporary portraiture. He has been showing in New York and California galleries since 1980, and has recently been included in group exhibitions in Paris, Barcelona, and Madrid.

Miriam Cabessa (American, born Casablanca, Morocco, 1966)

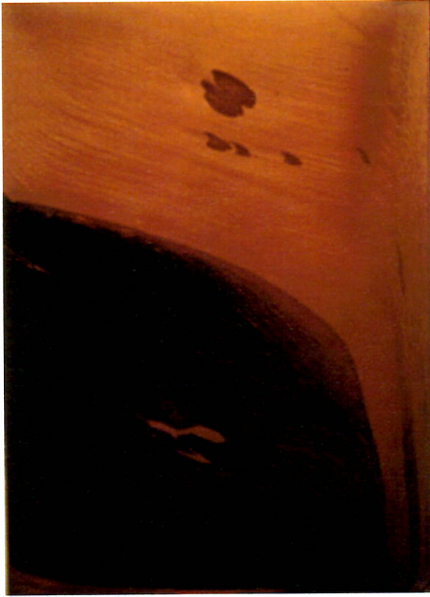


Untitled, 2003
Oil on canvas, 60 x 60 inches
Courtesy of artist and McKenzie Fine
Art, New York

Miriam Cabessa lived and studied in Isreal for many years before moving to New York. She attended Kalisher College of Art in Tel Aviv, and H'Midrasha College of Art in Ramat-Ha'Sharon, and then Cultural Studies at Camera Obscura in Tel Aviv. She has been showing her work in Isreali galleries since the early 1990s and in 1997 represented Isreal at the Venice Biennale. She began as a photographer, applying unusual materials to photographic paper such as urine, irons, kisses, and coins. In a sense her paintings are based on the same principle as her photographs, of blockage, whether object or paint blocks the light, or the removal of blockage, which creates light.

The white underpainting beneath the wet coat of pigment shines through wherever the wet top layer is removed. She pushes palms, fingers, fists, or her hand holding a glass, rag, or small comb, sometimes a squeegee, through the painting. She uses a rhythmic movement around the surface in a succession of long or short strokes. It is a performance that leaves a record of its making, but you don't see it if you don't know how it was done and don't quite believe it when you do. In her mind "the painting happens of itself, its own accord." That they end up mandalas for some unknown religion adds to their seriousness while not taking anything away from their beauty or their sensuousness.

Erik Dimas (American, born 1977)



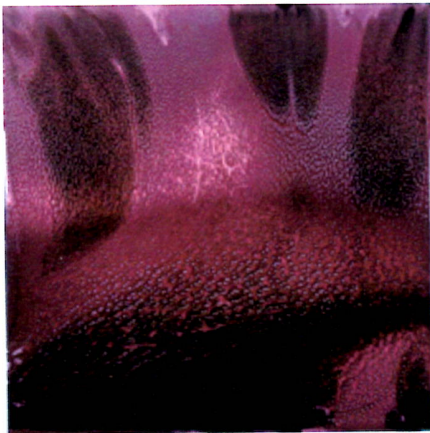
Untitled (Poured Painting, Bronze II),
2000

Lucite, acrylic, enamel, resin on wood,
40 x 30 x 2 inches

Courtesy of the artist

Slick, shiny, material oozes and flows over the surfaces of Eric Dimas' paintings like molten lava or some other natural phenomenon. The hand is not seen, no anguish registers. There is much action, but no protagonists, just colliding color shapes that wipe each other out and move on as if at will. While the viewer saw large soft rectangles of color jostling one another when looking at a Mark Rothko painting, the artist thought of his abstract images as actors on a stage acting out great Greek dramas. Dimas' epic dramas would seem to take place on a primordial diluvial plane.

Chemical interactions occur, causing colors to emerge and disappear, clusters to form themselves, and edges to solidify. Unlike Color-field painting where the paint flow leaves an exact record of it's making, here all is mystery. Dimas studied at the School of Fine Arts at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign from 1995 to 2000, which may explain why none of the Chicago School Imagism seems to have rubbed off on him despite the fact that since then he has been living and showing his work in Chicago. One of his teachers at Urbana was Michael McCaffrey, also in this exhibition.



Untitled (Pink + Brown), 2004

Lucite, acrylic, enamel, resin on wood,
30 x 30 x 2 inches

Courtesy of the artist

Susan Dory (American)

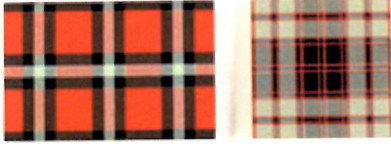


***Modest Pant*, 2003-04
Enamel on panel, 48 x 48 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Margaret
Thatcher Projects, New York**

Susan Dory was born, lives, and works in Seattle, but she studied at the Universitat Wien in Vienna and then spent almost five years studying on her own while traveling in India, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Europe. Despite this international, multi-cultural background, the objects that inspire her paintings are apparently rooted in the ordinary things around the average American house like kitchen utensils, patterns on bedspreads and curtains, quilts, toys, crochetwork, and hand-knitted sweaters. The things women craft and use are vaguely referenced in the colors of housedress material, though some critics see high-tech circuitry and microscopic cells, particularly when the forms seem to mutate into other shapes.

In *Fond Switch* the units slide forward and upward as if switching direction, but *Modest Pant* has contradictory movements that give no clue to the title's meaning. Along the bottom the forms seem to rise and push into our space, but at the top they are smaller and, by implication, further away. Round and bouncy spots of color take over from the quieter nudging horizontals below. Pink, beige, yellow and pale green predominate in both paintings, but orange appears in *Fond Switch*. The colors seem to belong to eras past when polka dots and other patterns prevailed in women's clothing. Blurry edges add to the feeling of movement, as does the sense of forms drifting out of view.

Suzann Dunaway (American)

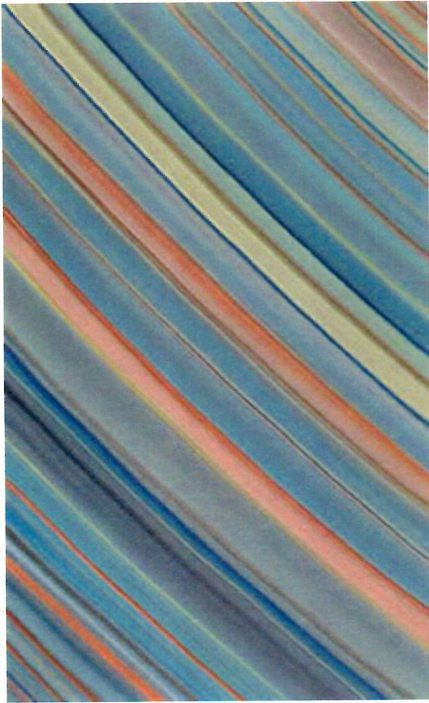


MacLaine, MacPherson, 2000
Oil, alkyd, wax on board, 5 x 5 7/8
inches & 5x5 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Although born in Florida and receiving her BA from the University of Miami, Coral Gables, Suzann Dunaway moved to the San Francisco Bay Area and studied with painter Jay DeFeo, getting her MBA at Mills College. As famously thick as DeFeo's canvases were, Dunaway's are thin, and in recent years, even applied through fine silk screens. The preparation process, including the color and its consistency, seems endlessly painstaking, but the screening is all-at-one-go instantaneous. It's the best way she's found to achieve a non-handmade look.

For Dunaway, a fragment of jewelry, a piece of fabric, a couple of words in the right typeface, can provide a host of clues to an identity – a type, nationality, class, self-image. Plaids have fascinated her for decades. Clan association with particular tartans was a late 18th century British marketing strategy on the part of the textile industry. Before then men wore any plaids they liked in any combination. Plaid's elemental textile structure makes it universally indigenous. They are found the world over associated with everything from royalty to parochial school students and inept golfers. "I want to give the sense of the small, the everyday, the overlooked as seen in those moments when the engagement with the moment is so absorbing that it becomes transparent," she writes.

Chris Gallagher (Born England 1954, lives in New York)

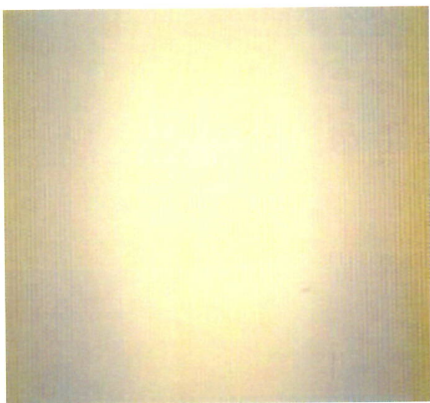


Bye Bye Broadway, 2002
Oil on canvas, 35 x 22 inches
Courtesy of McKenzie Fine Art, New
York

"My work is very much about the streaming nature of information," Gallagher states. Not pure abstraction, his paintings have multiple, simultaneous readings –the rings of dust around planets, the chromatic harmonies of a stunning sunset, a view through haze, a desert mirage, or rippling water. Any of those interpretations may follow an initially sensuous experience of the paintings themselves. Gallagher's paintings emerge from a slow painting process, during which he lays down one striation of color after another from side to side, each lapping over and revising the one before it. With this repetitive act he builds varied and ever-shifting boundaries between the colors, slowly and methodically fixing that which is fast and ephemeral.

Gallagher was born in Stoke-on-Trent, England and received his BA from London's Central School of Art. His MA is from New Mexico State University in Las Cruces. Since the late 1980s, he has been living in New York and is a design consultant on installing art collections when he isn't painting in his Williamsburg studio. He has been showing in group exhibitions since the late seventies, and has had solo New York shows since 1991.

Christian Garnett (Born 1957)

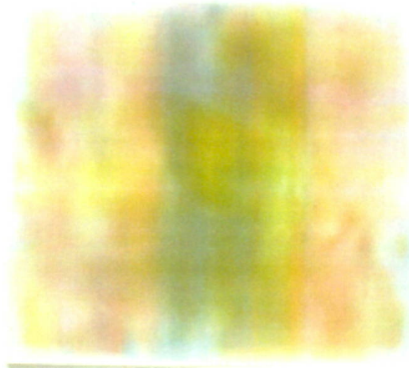


Untitled, 2002
Oil on linen, 80 x 72 inches (detail)
Courtesy Elizabeth Dee Gallery, New York

A press release for Christian Garnett's recent solo show stated that "his paintings work the intersection between scientific investigation and ecstatic transcendence." He creates light and sometimes optical effects bordering on the delirious. He starts with a solid, strong-hued ground that he covers with another layer, or layers of contrasting paint. These modulate from the saturated tones at the edges to bright white at the middle, which seems to emanate intense light. The layers are made in one total-coverage pass, which must be perfect for the illusion to work. More recently, as in this painting, silk screens have been used with all over patterns of small computer-generated circles. A range of effects can be obtained by overlapping successive screen passes or by passing different hues through a succession of shifting screens.

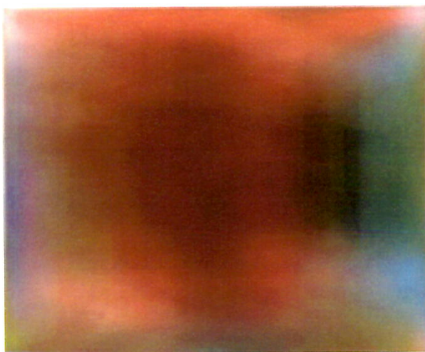
Garnett was born in Easton, Maryland and received his BFA from Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY in 1981. He has been living in New York and included in group shows there and all over the country since the mid-1980s. He has had solo shows in New York, Texas, Belgium and Germany starting in 1991, and his work is in many museum and corporate collections.

Prudencio Irazabal (Born Spain, 1954; lives New York)



Fugue 4 (1R8), 2000
Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 69 inches
Courtesy Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

The glassy sheen and luminous transparency of Prudencio Irazabal's paintings are neither intended statements nor accidents. He has long been concerned with light and immateriality, painting radiantly glowing surfaces without a trace of the human hand that so lovingly made them. The immanence of non-specifically sourced light always has spiritual connotations. Since the mid-1980s he has lived in New York's Chinatown, but, looking at his ethereal abstractions, you are convinced he still hears the church bells of his native Spain ringing. As the artist wrote: "Perhaps this is no more than an attempt to integrate exterior and interior, to balance material and visual dimensions. Or, if you will, the spiritual and the material."



3D2, 2004
Acrylic on canvas, 28 x 34 inches
Courtesy Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

In some of Irazabal's paintings a look at the thickness of the acrylic on the sides reveals how many layers of translucent and transparent acrylic went into their formation. But from the front the shifting imagery within the square or rectangle dissolves, re-emerges, its grids of color moving back and forth, side to side, within the painting's outer edges – now you see them, now you don't. Irazabal believes that everything in a painting happens within its depths, between the surface plane and the background plane, but he gives the viewer nothing to hold onto in the viewing process. One is lost in transition. New life is infused into abstraction, a new old art form.

James Lecce (American, born 1971)

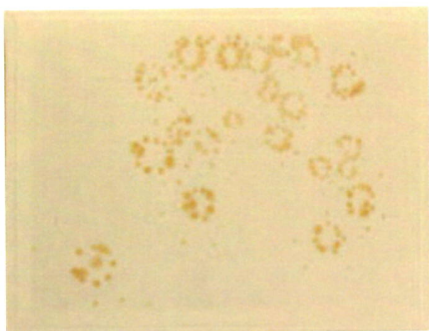


Candy colors curl and swirl through Lecce's pictorial space across liquid currents and wispy airstreams, all shined to a gloss. His working process is very deliberate, while his results seem natural, even accidental. Working from carefully developed studies, he selects colors with contradictory associations. In *High Dive*, for example, they seem to be the sea, or nature, and machine made things (automobile trim), or architecture (steel and glass). His actual painting procedure involves pouring, carefully mixing, and layering polymer emulsions by spraying, injecting, blowing, squirting, and squeegeeing them in seven layers, the final layer pulling all the elements together and wrapping the whole around the edges.

After receiving his BFA at the University of Pittsburgh, Lecce attended Brooklyn's Pratt Institute for his MFA. Since the mid-1990s he has been included in a number of group exhibitions that made important exploratory probes into a renewed interest in abstraction of a particularly non-expressionist sort: *My Pretty* in 1997 at HERE, N.Y.; *Plastic* at Fenix Gallery, Taos, and *Harsh* at Mother, N.Y., both in 1998; *Tilt* at Cristinerose Gallery and *Jump* at the Painting Center, both in New York in 2002; and *Super Cool* at Kathryn Markel Fine Arts, N.Y., and *Not Just Another Abstract Painting Show* at the Ambrosino Gallery in Miami, both in 2003.

High Dive, 2003
Acrylic polymer emulsion on panel, 84
x 42 inches
Courtesy of McKenzie Fine Art, New
York

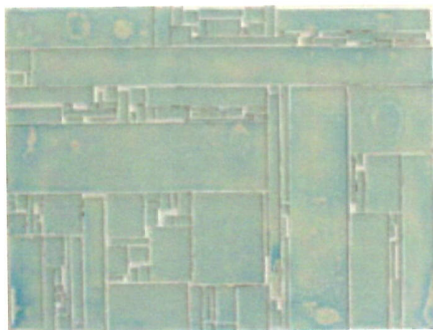
Emil Lukas (American, born 1964)



#0714 *Eternal Fat Study*, 2001
Potato chips and thread on canvas, 24
x 32 inches
Courtesy of the artist



#658 *Dark Side*, 2000
Walnut ink and plaster between glass
sheets, 24 x 32 inches
Courtesy of the artist

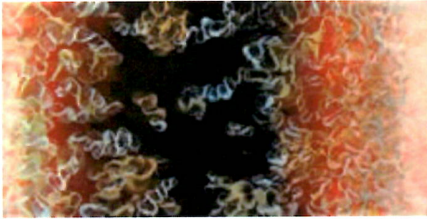


#0705 *Air Under Glass*, 2001
Acrylic on canvas over wood, 24 x 32
inches
Courtesy of the artist

Emil Lukas can make art out of anything, it seems, but the three examples here are some of his favorite mediums. He "lets the marks make themselves," as he puts it. The fat on the potato chips in *Eternal Fat Study* slowly seeps into the thread that binds them and the canvas to which they are bound, forming beige marks that resemble petals or paw-prints. In *Dark Side*, the walnut ink (a homemade distillation of crushed walnuts) goes where it can between the glass sheets until it is stopped by hardened plaster. Until then there are chemical and physical interactions. The marks made look like frost or snow, micro-scopic cell structures or vast planetary plains viewed tele-scopically. The *Air Under Glass* images that look like topographical maps of ruined cities, or the exposed interior walls of apartment dwellings, are produced by simply removing variously sized sheets of glass from a dried painted surface on which they were lain while it was wet.

Born in Pittsburgh, Lukas received a BFA from Pennsylvania's Edinboro University in 1986 and then spent eight years in New York and Europe before settling back in Stockertown, PA, not far from Allentown. He has had one person shows in Paris, Cologne, Verona, San Francisco, and many in New York. He was included in the 1998-99 showings of the prophetic *Abstract Painting Once Removed* at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City, and the Contemporary Art Museum in Houston.

David Mann (American, born 1950)



Through and Through, 2003
Oil, alkyd, and acrylic on canvas
stretched over panel, 36 x 72 inches
Lent by Robert D. Speiser, New York

David Mann's father ran a silkscreening business in Buffalo where he grew up, so from an early age he was familiar with squeegee action in the service of a photomechanical art making process. In the local museum he was given the opposite model in Abstract Expressionism, where artists like Jackson Pollock and Clyfford Still painted out of their personal experience to create universal statements. This way of painting was stressed when he studied art at Kent State (BFA). Then, at the University of Buffalo (MFA), with Minimalism, he returned to the former, more mechanical process. Now he uses both. His process is controlled and cool, resulting in work seeming to be untouched by the human hand yet touching in its fragility and gentle beauty.



Coil, 2003
Oil, alkyd, and acrylic on canvas
stretched over panel, 47 x 38 ¾ inches
Courtesy of McKenzie Fine Art, New
York

Alternately appearing microscopic, galactic, submarine, tropical-organic, crystalline, and primordial, the teeming, ever active mindscapes he creates can remind of the fetish finishes of California cars one minute and blooming ceramic glazes the next. *Through and Through* provides a rare glimpse through the clustering forms to empty depths behind, but *Coil's* density is more typical. Multi-hues prevail now and there is a greater range of biomorphic shapes within a given painting. The transparency and ambiguity of Mann's forms is purified abstraction.

Oliver Marsden (Born England, 1973)



Halo III, 2004
Acrylic on linen, 47 ½ x 47 ½ inches
Courtesy of the Artist

Marsden, in his new *Halo* series, is now painting pure light - paint as light, color as light. It glows so brightly that its radiation bleaches the canvas even whiter in a halo immediately surrounding it. The pulsations generated from it are irrepressible. Is it spinning? Where does it stop and space begin? What is vision and what reality? The sphere of color has a spatial relationship with the surface of the painting it seems to phase in and out of, making its edges and corners disappear, to paraphrase what Roy Exley a writer friend of the artist, wrote about the painting. The artist explains, "the halo pieces originated from research into fluid motion and the movement of energy through liquids, waveforms, and from the notion of matter as condensed or frozen light." Those earlier *Waveform* and *Linqueform* paintings were achieved through careful trompe l'oeil: beautiful airbrushed replications of computer generated and manipulated microphotographic imagery. Now he simply paints.

Marsden received his BFA from Edinburgh College of Art with Honors in 1994 after taking a Foundation Year at Cheltenham College of Art with Distinction. 1995 was spent on an Erasmus Exchange in Montpellier, France at the Ecole Regionale des Beaux Arts and 1996 was spent at the Cleveland Institute of Art in Ohio on exchange. He has been showing with the Spencer Brownstone Gallery in New York and the Blue Gallery in London and been included in exhibitions at the Beaux Arts and the Courtauld Institute of Art in London and the Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh.

Michael McCaffrey (Born 1968 Scotland, lives in California)



#11, 2002
Enamel on sintra, 48 x 48 inches
Courtesy of the artist.

Michael McCaffrey writes that he understands art as an act of "pure execution," thus he works "towards seamless painting, free of the encumbrances of associative form (line, depth of field, image) and physical disruption (edges, textures) to create a sublime, resonant picture that is descriptively mute." He wants the viewer to experience purely phenomenological effects, which he acquires through pigment and tone variances within an otherwise uninterrupted field of paint. Chicago critic Polly Ullrich wrote that his paintings "are existential statements on how human beings find themselves inserted in a shifting world of surrounding sensory events – an effort that is usually attempted in philosophy through words." Prolonged, steady viewing increases the color intensity dramatically or brings out color, as in the "white paintings," where at first it seems there is none.

All of McCaffrey's paintings measure 48 x 48 inches and are made from oil-based enamel paints on sintra, ½ inch thick PVC sheets. No special mechanisms or interfaces are employed to apply the paint. He graduated with a BA from the Glasgow School of Art in Scotland, then moved to the U.S. and got an MFA at University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign in 1996. He taught painting and drawing there for three years before moving to Chicago where he co-directed the Standard Gallery and contributed to Toronto's *C Magazine* before moving to California this year.

Mary McDonnell (American)



***Mole in the Ground*, 2003**
Oil on canvas, 44 x 44 inches
Courtesy of the artist and James
Graham & Sons, New York

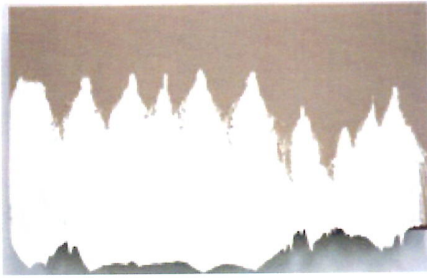
McDonnell paints on the floor, with the wood panel lying flat like an absorbent table. She uses square formats of either wood panels or paper, and works in oil paint or watercolor, applying numerous layers of thinned paint with ice scrapers, squeegees, and other tools that provide a flat edge. She works from all sides, which causes the painting to have vertical and horizontal traces, faint striations of color imbedded within the surrounding tonal field. At the same time, the wooden surface, and whatever irregularities it has – such as pits, scratches, and the effects of the artist's own vigorous scrapings – alters the color as it builds up in these niches and declivities, however small or shallow. Consequently, there is no pure or solid field of color, but rather luminous tonalities made up of different shades of colors as one area bleeds into another, shifting from one tonality to another.



***Untitled (Graphite)*, 2003**
Oil and graphite on canvas, 4 x 4 feet
Courtesy of the artist and James
Graham & Sons, New York

Mary McDonnell seeks the experience of the elemental, the natural world in her paintings, which are landscape abstractions. An avid birdwatcher, currently constructing a studio in the Upstate New York woods, she grew up in Michigan, attending Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, which put her in close touch with nature. A residency at Sleeping Bear Dunes on Lake Michigan inspired some of the recent work. The three-tiered vertical stack structure she often uses, like Mark Rothko's, also implies landscape, but where he worked against that reading with color, she uses vertical linear accidents.

Roxy Paine (American, born 1966)



PMU (Painting Manufacture Unit) #13,
2003
Acrylic on linen on board, 38 x 59 x 4
inches
Lent by John Robertshaw, New York

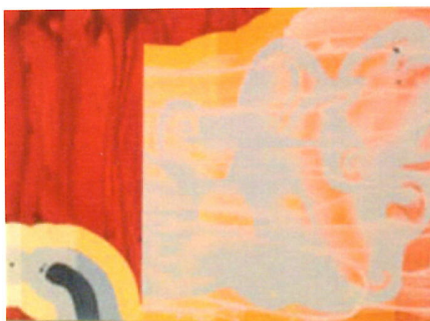
Roxy Paine says he wants to "take that romantic idea of artistic expression and force it into this context of mass production which it resists." He does so with his Paint Dipper, an upright metal apparatus, controlled by a computer program that repeatedly dips a canvas into a trough of white acrylic paint, then raises it to let it drip and dry. The computerized variables are how long the dipping lasts, how often, and how much drying time it gets. Many paintings take months to complete. Thus, Paine's machines, allegedly designed to be labor- and time-saving, are actually the exact opposite; they require a huge amount of labor to develop and implement, and the works they produce require an enormous amount of time. The machine does not generate identical copies, but complete originals, as if each were handmade.

The finished paintings consist of multiple layers of paint with hardened drips at the bottom like dangling stalactites, suggesting the sedimentary development of rock formations. He loves the way nature exposes the process of time so clearly, and deliberately reflects that here. The rock formations in the west have had a big influence since he attended the College of Santa Fe, 1986-87. Two more years at Pratt Institute and then he started Brand Name Damages, a co-op showplace, in Williamsburg, NY, with fellow students. After 1995 his work took two directions: the abstract paintings, such as this, and sculptures, and trompe l'oeil sculptures and installations of plants and fungi – art-making machines and artist-made nature.

David Reed (American, born 1946)



#292, 1989-91
Oil and alkyd on linen, 28 x 116 inches
(detail)
Courtesy of Max Protetch Gallery, New York

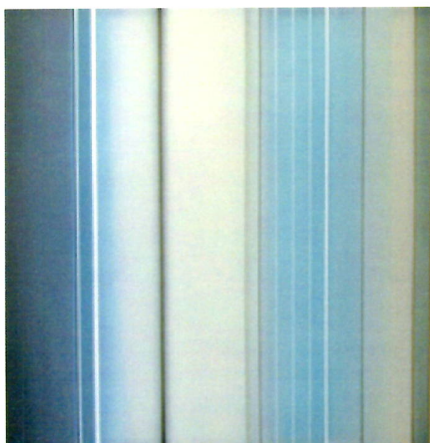


#403, 1997-98
Oil, alkyd on solid ground
32 x 56 inches (detail)
Courtesy of Max Protetch Gallery, New York

Time and the experience of time are important issues in David Reed's work, both in the process of making and in the act of viewing. In the 1970s, in response to Frank Stella's "What you see is what you see," to Minimal thinking, to Process art, and to other hidden factors, some painters began to make self-determined paintings. For Reed that meant making paintings with horizontal strokes directly brushed on canvases, the length of these strokes being determined by the length of his arm in a standing position. Created on canvases sized to fit these marks, the paintings thus denote real time – that of the gesture, with real space – that of the mark – and measure the individual dimensions and capacity of Reed's physical ability, they are both determined by paint and by his body. Like Bernard Frize, the experimental French painter, Reed would sometimes attach many brushes together to make a mark. Illusion slips in as a result of gravity and drying. When, like #292, the painting extends outside the viewer's visual frame, the time and space to encompass it expands as well.

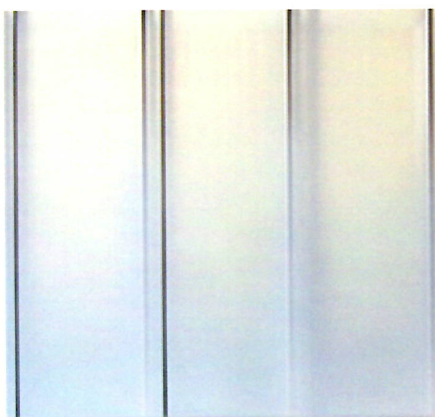
Born in San Diego and educated at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Maine, the New York Studio School, and Reed College in Portland (BFA), Reed lives and works in New York. He shows with Max Protetch Gallery and has had solo museum exhibitions with catalogues at museums in San Francisco, 1992; Cologne, 1995; Graz, Austria, 1996; San Diego, 1998; Philadelphia, 1999; St. Gallen, Switzerland and Hanover Germany, 2001.

Joie A. Rosen (American)



Clearing, 2000
Urethane, pigment on silk on wood
support, 30" x 29"
Courtesy of Margaret Thatcher
Projects, New York

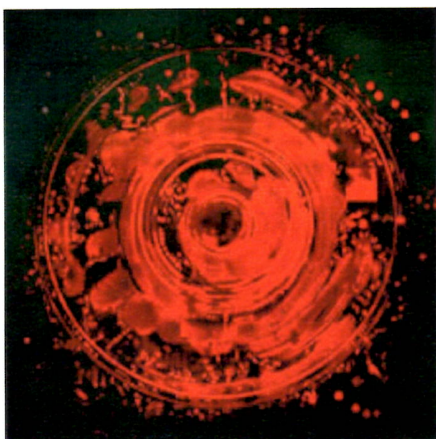
Rosen takes inspiration for her abstract paintings from visual events in the world: fog lifting; illuminated raindrops; multiple shadows created by a single ray of light; the darkened, silent light shows seen from subway windows in abandoned stations now passed clamorously by in speeding trains; shadows on buildings, in hallways. She transforms these fleeting impressions into multiple layers of translucent urethane and pigment on sheer silk stretched over wooden frames. Invariably the colored planes and stripes are vertical – countering any landscape interpretations even when the title might indicate one, as in *Clearing*. Twilight tones predominate--soft blues, faintly greenish grays, palest yellow grays-- and night sky blues. The white of the wall, or the painting's backboard, is an inch or so behind the colored scrim of the painting. It absorbs its colors and reflects light back through the silk in recent works like *Double Take*. Light is captured, colored, distilled, and reflected within the confines of a small, magic box.



Double Take, 2003
Urethane, pigment on silk on wood
support, 17" x 18"
Courtesy of Margaret Thatcher
Projects, New York

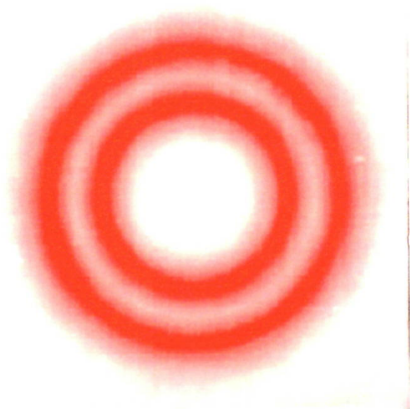
Rosen's studies began as an exchange student at St. Martins College of Art, London, in 1984 and continued at the Massachusetts College of Art in Boston (BFA) and New York University (MA in 1992). She has been showing in New York since 1990 and having solo shows at Margaret Thatcher in New York and Marcel Sitcoske in San Francisco since 2000. She was included in the important early exhibition, *Abstraction and Immanence*, at Hunter College's Times Square Gallery in 2001.

Jeffrey Simmons (American, born 1968)



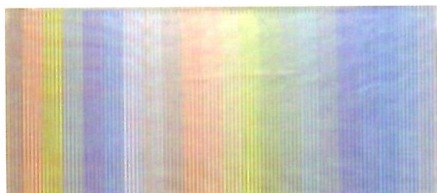
***Come on Night (red on black)*, 2004**
Acrylic polymer emulsion on canvas,
24 x 24 inches
Courtesy of Greg Kucera Gallery,
Seattle

Simmons makes paintings in categories: *Circle, Line, Layered Line, Layered Prism, Rotary, Moiré, and Science Fiction*. *Recurrent*, 2002, is a circle painting made on an easel with bearings that rotate the square canvas on a fixed axis while the artist's steadied hand holds a paintbrush to its surface. Seen close up, there are many tiny bands of slightly lighter or darker reds out of which the rings were built. Still it is difficult to imagine the 60 to 80 layers of acrylic polymer emulsion that comprised them. It is a little easier to see how a moiré painting like *Spark*, also 2002, came into existence with the paint applied using autobody painters' tape and pin striping vinyl to re-move color and to cover it to add others. The effect is purely optical. Recently, in paintings like *Come on Night*, luminosity is the concern. Paint application is not tightly controlled, giving results that look like embers, fireworks, or interstellar matter. As active as the imagery is when revealed by sanding through layers of paint, the surface is perfectly smooth.



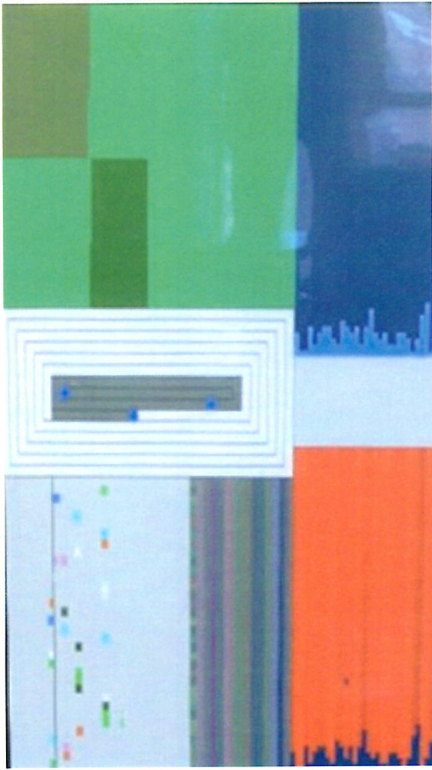
***Recurrent*, 2002**
Acrylic polymer emulsion on canvas,
22 x 22 inches
Courtesy of Greg Kucera Gallery,
Seattle

Cincinnati-born Simmons has been a factor on the Seattle scene since he arrived there after receiving his BFA at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, in 1991. He was given a solo exhibition at Bellingham's Whatcom Museum in 2000-01.



Spark, 2002
Alkyd, Mylar and epoxy resin on
canvas, 13 x 29 inches
Courtesy of Greg Kucera Gallery,
Seattle

John F. Simon Jr. (American, born 1963)



Color Panel, 2002
Software, MacIntosh 280c and acrylic,
dimensions variable
Courtesy Sandra Gering Gallery, New
York

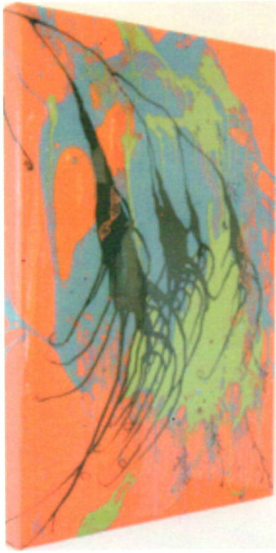
In his time-based, computerized color studies, such as *Color Panel*, 2002, John F. Simon, Jr. interprets "color rules" into software. Simon has been influenced by the Bauhaus movement and in this work he moves through color possibilities explored in the color theories proposed by Bauhaus artists, including Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky. The activation of these studies results in a dynamic composition of ever-changing color palettes that never repeat themselves. He visualizes code: "Ideas become software, which becomes images, which become objects, which spur on more ideas." The recent use of a large-scale laser cutter allows him to go directly from codes to objects. His *MultiStreams* tap into an old love of mapping, not as a cartographer of place, but rather of the human experience. Traffic patterns, blood flow, leaf structures can be mapped, and, although he may start with real maps, like U.S. Geological Surveys, they are radically altered.

Simon was trained in geology at Brown University where he was mapping NASA's Viking Orbiter photographs of Mars. After receiving a BS and a BA from Brown, he studied Earth and Planetary Science at Washington University, St. Louis, for an MA, then Computer Art at New York's School of Visual Arts for an MFA. He lives in New York where he was commissioned by the Guggenheim Museum to do an internet piece, *Unfolding Object*, 2001, for guggenheim.net.

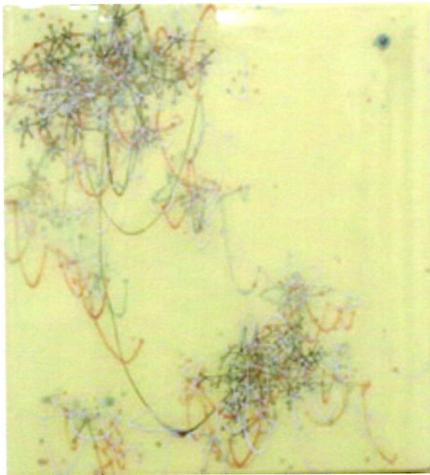


MultiStreams, 2004
Laser-cut laminate, 48 x 28 inches
Courtesy Sandra Gering Gallery, New
York

Kimberly Squaglia (American, born 1971)



Marmala, 2003
Oil and resin on wood, 24 x 24 inches
Courtesy of the Finesilver Gallery, San Antonio, Texas



Marina, 2004
Oil and resin on wood, 20 x 18 inches
Courtesy of the Finesilver Gallery, San Antonio, Texas

Squaglia paints imagery that looks like it belongs in the tropics, underwater, or under a microscope, yet she was born in Sacramento, coastal California's inland capitol, studied for her BFA at California State University Chico, and for her MFA at the University of Texas, San Antonio, cities one associates with anything but water. She now lives in Marstons Mills, Massachusetts on Cape Cod, where snorkeling is rare and certainly not as exotic as her imagery.

The biological/botanical forms in Squaglia's paintings look like they grew there or floated into the frame of the painting by accident. Not any specific life forms, but they seem to move as though they are, mainly because of their stringy tendrils and meshes that seem so natural. The sea is referenced in color and title in *Marina* and others, but many of her colors seem to belong to the world of food, particularly sweets like jam, candy, and ice cream. *Marmala*, for instance, only the spelling at the end is changed to protect the color source's innocent identity. She lets oil paint fall on layers of resin in pools, clumps, and strings. When dry it is submerged under another film of resin, and the process is repeated until the finishing layer of clear resin on top. The resultant illusion has the viewer peering into "an enveloping, shifting, ambiguous space in which forms float, spin and morph," which is what the artist says she intends. The imagery is so intimate it is surprising that it is as effective on large canvases as in small ones.

Irving Zane Taran (American, born 1941)



Rainbow Remnant on Sky and Water\Near Davieaux Light, from the series, "Heavy Weather\Superior", 2004
Acrylic on birch panel, 80 x 64 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Irving Zane Taran started out working in ceramics, but during the initial year of graduate work at Michigan State University, glazes became his focus and he sensed that the painting medium and acrylic paints would better address his personal exploration as an artist. "A lot of people when they look at my work say it doesn't look like paint. It looks very viscous and fluid, like it just healed. That's my ceramic background coming through. I switched over to painting when I realized I wasn't interested in the three-dimensional form. I just wanted to display the glaze on the surface." The Interference, Pearlescent, and Iridescent acrylic paints he uses actually change color with the viewer's movement and the lighting, an effect not unlike turning an iridescent glazed vase in one's hands.

Taran lives in East Lansing, Michigan, and has taught at Michigan State University since the 1960s. He has shown consistently over the years in Minnesota, Chicago, and locally and his work is in numerous corporate and museum collections. He spends a great deal of time in nature exploring the remoter regions of North America seeking to create, in his words, "a vigorous pictorial event," one as exciting as his first experience of the Northern Lights. Paintings like these from the series, *Heavy Weather\Superior*, reenact in paint a remembered visual episode. Taran says, landscape "allowed for the potential of abstraction."



Rainbow Remnant on Sky and Water\West of Mendotta Light, from the series, "Heavy Weather\Superior," 2004
Acrylic on birch panel, 80 x 60 inches
Courtesy of the artist

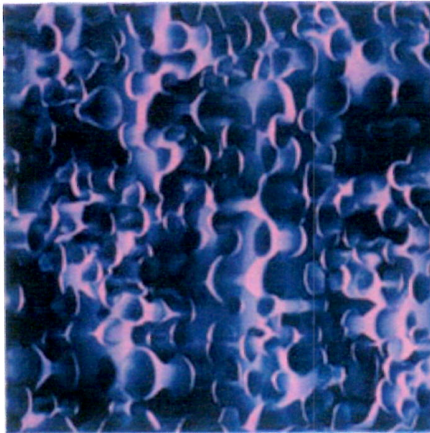
William Wood (American, born 1960)



Untitled, 2003
Oil and wax on wood, 48 x 42 inches
Courtesy of the Jack Shainman Gallery,
New York

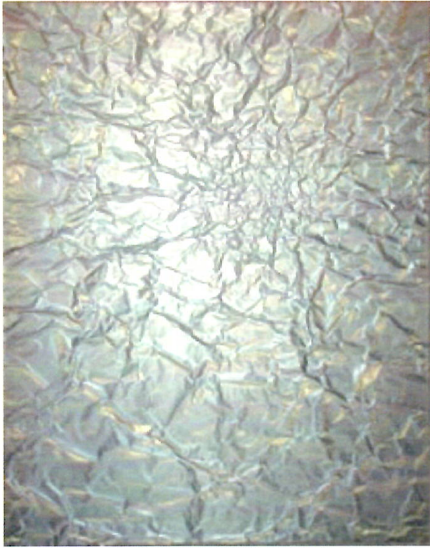
A thoroughgoing New Yorker, Wood was born there, studied at Manhattan College and the School of Visual Arts and was awarded a Marie Walsh Sharpe Grant in 1997, which provides recipients with studios in Manhattan. New York is a black and white city, not colorful like San Francisco or L.A. and it looks its best in pre-color photographs. Perhaps it is the reason Wood worked in monochrome grays and blue-grays for so many years, which lent his paintings a misleadingly photographic look. Only recently have other colors such as deep red or yellow taken over an occasional canvas. New York is also marvelous at night, and all of his work has a nocturnal or backlit quality.

The shapes in Wood's paintings are clear in outline but mystifying as to their nature. They meld sensuously into other forms before your eyes, eliding off into depth or curving out toward you inexplicably the way a Cubist plane becomes the space behind itself which then becomes the abutting next plane. He uses ordinary household implements like a virtuoso to create these shapes in the wet paint that may look like suspended mercury, bone fragments, flowing ribbons or cellular structures. Wood's paint has been seen as referencing photography directly because it serves "as an emulsion-like medium by which spatial relations, light, and tonal gradations are realized." He achieves both technical perfection and perfect ambiguity.



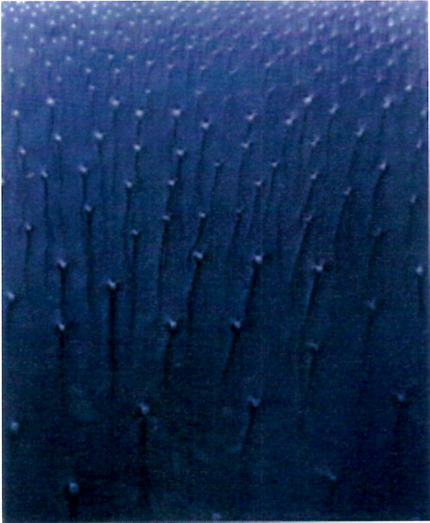
Untitled (WW03.004), 2003
Oil and wax on canvas, 36 x 30 inches
Courtesy of the Jack Shainman Gallery,
New York

Jason Young (Born Canada, 1969)



Gold Foil, 2004
Acrylic and resin on honeycomb alloy,
58 x 46 inches
Courtesy Cristinrose/Josée Bienvenue
Gallery, New York

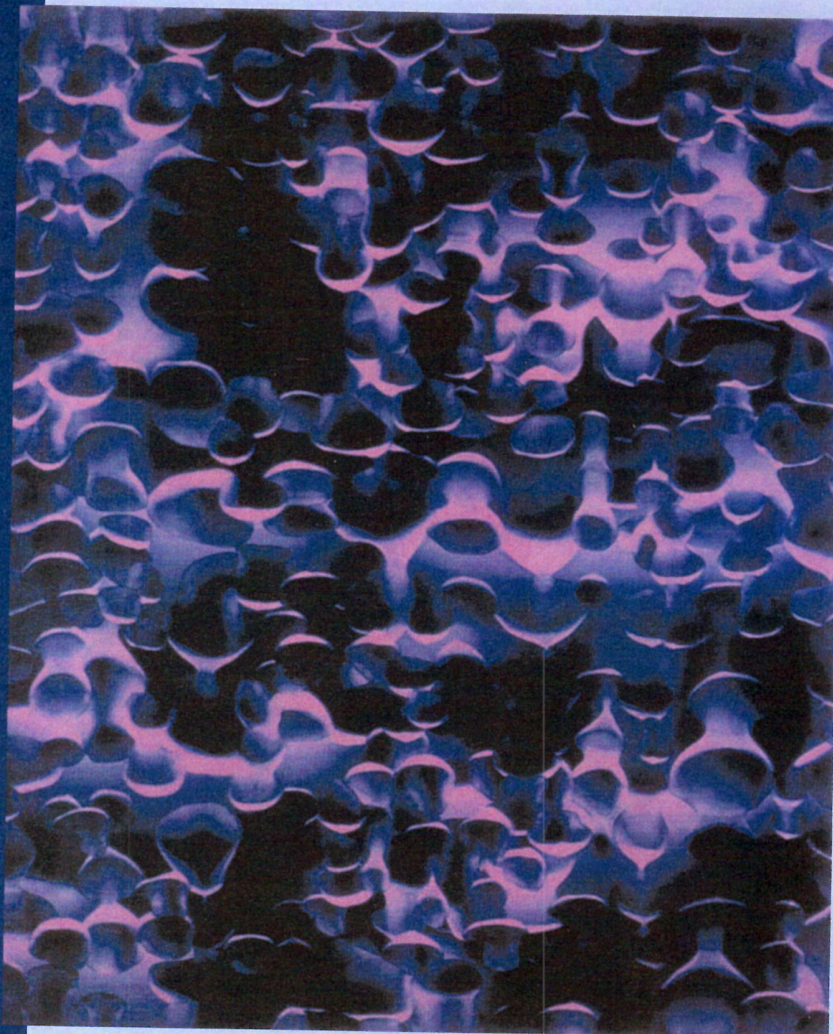
Young's work is built up in multiple layers of epoxy resin embossed in the past with "droplets" or "puddles" and recently with the rills and crevices we associate with crumpled foil (*Gold Foil*) or small, organic-seeming protrusions (*Gunmetal Tap*). Depressed areas are filled with solutions of acrylic pigments and catalysts before the next layer is applied. In a last step, Young's layerings can be suspended in a bath of hardened clear resin where they float in permanent stillness and transparency like ants trapped in amber. This buildup of viscosities and chromatic effects culminates in works of mesmerizing visual complexity whose phenomenal properties are suspended under a slick resin skin. The patterns suggest animal hides, surface fissures and, not coincidentally, the fluid virtuosity of some Abstract Expressionist paintings.



Gunmetal Tap, 2004
Acrylic and resin on honeycomb alloy,
58 x 46 inches
Courtesy Cristinrose/Josée Bienvenue
Gallery, New York

Young wears a full body suit to use the resin, breathing through a respirator, and has to handle it with heavy gloves. Working with the epoxy is like going scuba diving, he says. Born in Vancouver, he now lives and works in New York after studying at the Cleveland Institute of Arts in La Cote France, the School of Fine Arts at the University of Southern California, and, finally a year at the Institute des Hautes Etudes Plastiques in Paris. He has had solo shows with galleries in Toronto, Hollywood, Santa Monica, Vancouver, Seoul, Milan, Turin, Boston, and Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Spain as well as New York.

***Paintings That
Paint Themselves***
Or So It Seems



Kresge Art Museum
Michigan State University
September 7 – October 31, 2004