

Star-Telegram FORT WORTH

Three artists cover the color spectrum

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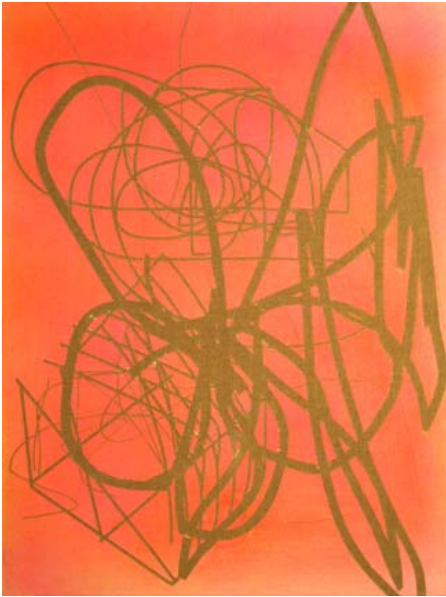
The North Texas art scene continues to buzz, with the plethora of new galleries that opened in Dallas last year appearing to flourish. Road Agent's recent show of drawings by the Fort Worth artist M was excellent, and it sold out. Art Prostitute has renovated its space, changed the gallery name to The Public Trust and continued to well represent the graphic/design/pop-art front. Kenny Goss has been on a global spending spree, buying up every available piece of significant recent British art on the market in order to launch the Goss-Michael Foundation, a nonprofit devoted to that particular niche. The Cynthia Mulcahy and Gerald Peters galleries are moving by the start of this fall. The list goes on ...

Marty Walker Gallery's latest offering is a solid testament to the viability of American abstract painting, and one of her best shows to date. The three artists represented are all Texas-based: Mark Flood is mostly a terrible colorist. You sometimes get the sense that, like a kid, he just grabs the brightest tubes out of the box (preferably in some kind of metallic fluorescent) and makes a dominantly blue piece, a green one, a red one and a yellow one, while mashing in blobs of just about everything else in as obnoxious a way as possible. Believe it or not, it totally works here. He has retreated to a smaller scale and maintains a single inquiry, pushing the figurative approach he introduced in his last show much further while keeping it straightforward and focused (if as chromatically challenging as ever). The surfaces are rich, the beings inhabiting them varied and nuanced. I love these pieces, and find them at once hilarious, evocative, discordantly musical and totally winning.

Jeff Elrod has recently joined the growing artist enclave in Marfa, and his three small pieces here are a subtle counterpoint to Flood's onslaught. Elrod continues to explore the interface between computer drawing and the most traditional painting approach, meticulously crafting hard-edged, pixilated abstract figures on linen. Their simplicity lends them an impact that belies their means, and they converse knowingly with late modern masters like Robert Ryman, Brice Marden, Robert Mangold and Sol LeWitt.

Jeff Zilm doesn't necessarily steal the show, but his ominous black monochromes are new to me, and it's a powerful introduction. He paints them using the emulsion stripped off 35-mm movie prints and subtitles the paintings after the films now seen in ghostly transfiguration. They maintain

a strange essence of their origins; maybe it's just my imagination, or perhaps it's because the artist is somehow channeling them. In *Untitled (The Fat and the Lean)*, a painted frame overlays the image, as if the projector tracking has slipped. *Untitled (The Pilgrim)* is as commanding as Charlie Chaplin in the original, and somehow for just a wash of silvery black pigment on canvas, it has nearly as much presence. At a time when much is being made of celluloid preservation, Zilm's creation-through-destruction makes a fascinating counterpoint, with profound philosophical, even metaphysical implications.



Marty Walker Gallery
Untitled (Pink) (2007) by Jeff Elrod, acrylic on linen

New paintings by Jeff Elrod, Mark Flood, Jeff Zilm

Through July 21 at Marty Walker Gallery, 2135 Farrington St., Dallas.

Open 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday and by appointment.

214-749-0066; www.martywalkergallery.com