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tema celeste

contemporaryart

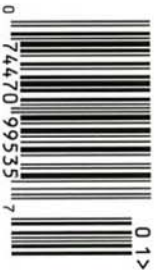
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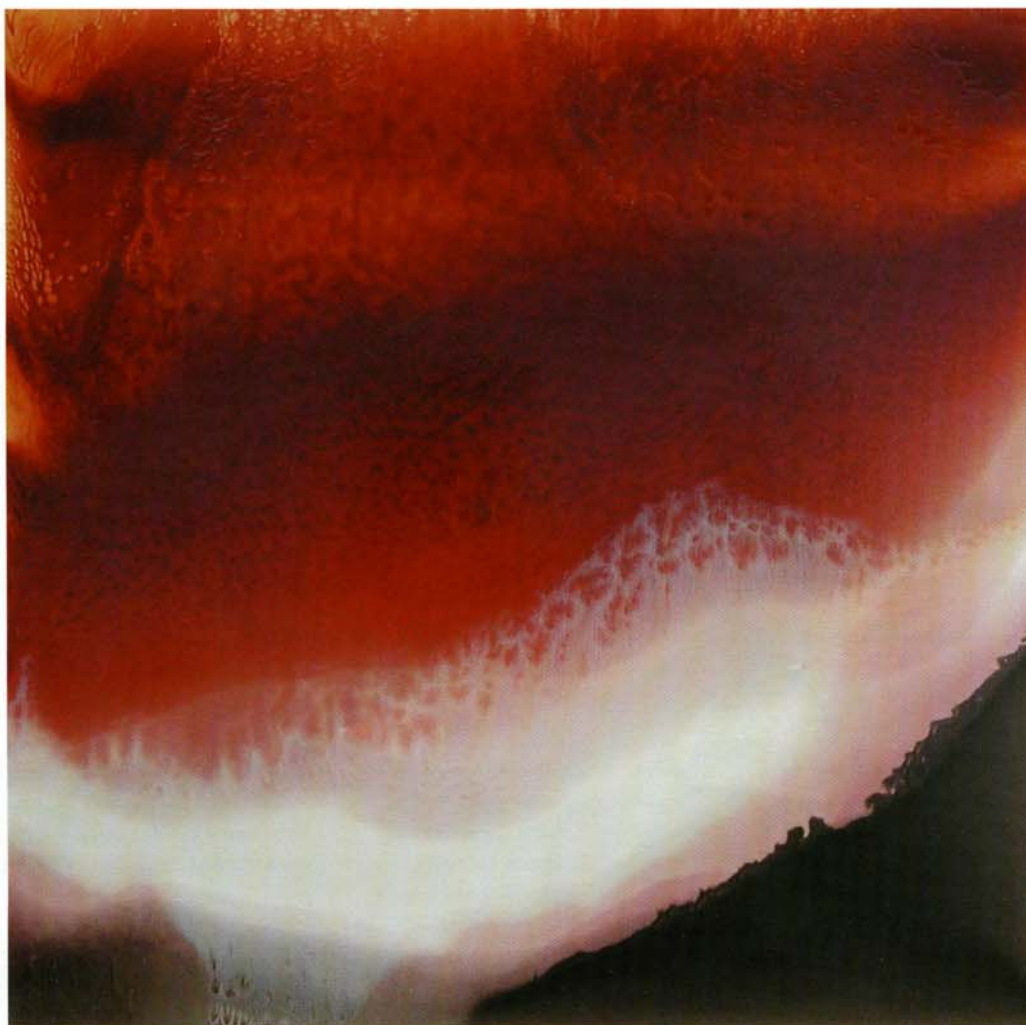
shana nys dambrot

In LA's current painting scene, Latin and Asian influences are combined with the identity-based political art of the 1980s, graffiti and post-digital flat graphics.



The truth is that it's no longer possible to give a simple answer to the question: What is Los Angeles painting? The scene's multi-generational, international scope lends it a strength and momentum that allows it to defy generalisation. And while among painters under the age of 45 there are undeniably vestiges of previous West Coast movements that still hold sway, these have evolved not into a singular identity but into an archipelago of related ideas. From the roots of the Light-and-Space Art of the late 1960s and '70s has grown an interest in brushless abstraction with an organic character. From the identity-based political art of the 1980s, a panoply of Latin and Asian influences have contributed to the visual lexicon. Rebellious young voices have embraced the recent love affair with graffiti and post-digital flat graphics, yet there is also a strongly academic, almost classical practice in evidence in both abstraction and figuration. And of course, some of the most interesting painting is being produced in the spaces in-between.

Andy Moses, for example, paints using controlled pours, and his line works at the mercy of gravity and motion. The dynamic fluidity of the swirls, eddies and receding horizons that emerge from this process is reminiscent of seascapes, but stops short of representation, retaining the ambiguity of action painting while courting the lyricism of colorist abstraction through radiant fuchsia, smoldering sapphire and pearlescent white. Jennifer Wolf, on the other hand, is the earth to Moses' ocean. She laboriously collects rocks and minerals and hand-grinds them into powdered pigments in a process replicating that used by old European masters. She too pours and pools her pigments, working in collaboration with gravity when it comes to compositions. And though her work is technically abstract, the topographical variegation of her surfaces is eerily reminiscent of the geological formations from which her work's components were excavated.



▲ **Jennifer Wolf** *Isolation#4*, 2005, mixed media / materiali vari, 107 x 107 cm. Courtesy William Turner Gallery, Santa Monica. Photo by / Foto di Gene Ogami.

▲ **Fumiko Amano** *Pattern*, 2005, mixed media on wood / materiali vari su legno, 61 x 122 cm.

Sandeep Mukherjee is also a practitioner of the geologically evocative. He applies a variety of acrylic media to the non-absorptive plastic surfaces he works on, most often in a reserved, earthy palette and in variations on a layered spiral pattern. The labor-intensive, obsessive quality of his brushless mark-making resembles canyon striations; an effect heightened as large swaths of the spirals are erased and the extant white plastic is embossed into bas-relief, further highlighting its topographical features. The final images are redolent desert peaks and moss-carpeted valleys, but do not relinquish the physicality of closely engineered watery mosaics.

Marion Lane doesn't use a brush either, but her relationship to acrylic paint is quite different from her peers'. She is less enamored with chaos, although she remains interested in the operations of chance. She creates an endless array of individual biomorphic shapes of various sizes through a nearly agricultural process of constant pouring. Onto prepared wood

panels she applies color-field grounds, and arranges these shapes incrementally until an intuitively organic composition pops into focus. The resemblance to the flora, fauna and geography of this and other planets is quasi-accidental, forming a captivating counterpart to the futuristic opalescence of their glossy surfaces.

Tim Forcum and Fumiko Amano are both abstract painters in the European-style atelier tradition. Concerned with the mechanics of style, they share an academic purism when it comes to patterns, surfaces and planar spaces. Forcum's compositions are conglomerations of single-color shapes that snake and float and jostle each other against muscular color-fields. Lines result from scraping palette knives to remove wax-infused pigment in layers, revealing pockets of patinated detail and forming sinews between floating oblongs and ovals. His arrangement of color and shape creates optical movement that suggests a series of

