

Jackie Gendel & Tom McGrath

March 14- April 4, 2009

David Castillo Gallery is proud to present new work by Jackie Gendel and Tom McGrath. Jackie Gendel combines personal language, Art Historical reference, and cultural cues to create a place and time populated largely by symbolic women and feminized notions of abstraction. The work brings to bear the decadence of Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Miss Havesham's disquieting nostalgia. Gendel magnetizes oil paint, merging and estranging color, form, and a delirious but skeptical mode of expressionism. The ultimate effect of her alchemy is akin to being caught in a bad dream. The viewer floats like a Matisse subject through a psychological landscape rendered with careful ambiguity—an oxymoron that pushes Gendel's mastery of her medium to transient ends. The viewer begins to doubt the innocuous round of a chin against chin modestly discernable beneath an otherworld of lemon chiffon. Who are these women? What do they want? How much of their effervescence is self-portraiture, how much is observation, and how much is paint finding paint on canvas? Tom McGrath's recent work hinges on the painted idiom between the personal and the societal. His gridded sky-views inspired by red-eye flights and lookout points along Los Angeles's Mulholland Drive command a romanticism in the emotional contexts familiar to American cities and city-dwellers. The God-views imbibed by his large canvasses speak not only to the theme-park tourism of American Graffiti-esque make-out spots, but also to the Manifest Destiny apparent in American painting, real estate, and privilege. McGrath's combination of neon and naturalist colors as well as the underlying irrationality of applied paint behind his grids suggests a wildness in opposition to imperialist thought in American sentiment and sustainability. Jackie Gendel earned her MFA in Painting and Printmaking from Yale University. She has been an artist in residence at the MacDowell Colony and The Atlantic Center for the Arts. Her work has appeared in Art Papers, Art in America, and the New Yorker. Tom McGrath holds degrees from the Cooper Union School of Art and Columbia University. His work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, and has appeared in Artforum and Harper's Magazine.