

Art in America

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Serena Bocchino: *Blue Fountains and Mountains*, 2007, enamel and oil on canvas, 52 by 68 inches; at Tria.

Serena Bocchino at Tria

"Blue," a show by painter Serena Bocchino, demonstrated a great affection for the color of the sea and sky in 10 enamel-and oil-on-canvas paintings (all works 2006 or '07). In most cases, the compositions consist of thin lines of paint lyrically dripped against mostly blue backgrounds, although in one, *Water Dance* (42 by 52 inches), the background is almost entirely white. Modernist and poetic, these are works focused on the sheer pleasure of painting, though in them Bocchino also attempts to emulate the abstract energies of music. Indeed, a 2007 video about her that shows

her walking on the beach or flinging paint against a canvas was scored by jazz musician Pat Metheny.

In *Water Dance*, black threads of paint twist and wind, creating looped enclosures, several of which the artist has colored in. A big, black circular band at the bottom is the focus, while the scribbling and scrawls surrounding it both reiterate and transform this basic shape.

Music Mind Float, a smaller work (28 by 24 inches), consists of a squarish formation of white paint threads set against a deep blue ground. The drips, in rhythmical repetitions, look nearly like notes on a score and seem to suggest that a joyful song is present both in the

imagination and, as the title suggests, in the sound of water.

Blue Fountains and Mountains, a large work at 52 by 68 inches, spouts a cataract whose vortex moves upward toward the white top of the composition. Lower down, against an expansive blue field, white, black and lighter blue scribbles are superimposed, giving the impression of movement away from the densely threaded center of the painting. Here, a jazzy syncopation activates the space. Inevitably in these works, Bocchino's audience will see a relationship with Pollock's drip paintings, though clearly she has worked hard to establish her own style. According to Bocchino, her works reference "waves, nets, fountains, skies and dreams," and her painterly language, which uplifts and gives pleasure to both artist and viewer, belongs not so much to pure abstraction as to an idealization of nature.

—Jonathan Goodman