



## Francine Tint

Tria

Asked for advice by young artists, in the days before unfledged MFA candidates were guaranteed more attention than seasoned practitioners, Clement Greenberg often urged them to “live a long time.” The history of van Gogh’s sales, the critic would explain, suggested that he would have died a rich man, if he hadn’t killed himself at 37. But Greenberg’s reply also arose from his belief that making art required a long-term commitment to the exploration of its possibilities.

Witness Francine Tint, who is no novice. For decades, she has been making abstract painting based on the unpremeditated manipulation of materials. Her strengths have always been her idiosyncratic sense of color, her ability to draw energetically at large scale, and her refusal to make ingratiating pictures. In her recent work, her audacity is

undiminished, her orchestration of hues more uninhibited than ever, and her drawing—sometimes manifest as line, sometimes assigned to the edges of color incidents—even more unpredictable.

The drama in the nearly 9-foot-wide *Irish Smoke* (2007) resided largely in the oddness of Tint’s palette, a near-rococo combination of rose, moss green, silver gray, golden yellow and murk that somehow invokes both urban cacophony and landscape. In *Object of Desire* (2008, 48 by 69 inches), a slapdash expanse of cinnabar red punctured with swipes of strange greens and blues, the astringent color is still the driving emotional force, but it has to compete with emphatic surface inflections and over-scale loopy drawing. Tint has remained true to her original convictions about what a painting can be, yet

her vigorous, street-smart recent works seem utterly of the moment.

When she first began exhibiting 25 years ago, her work announced her solidarity with color-based abstractionists even though Tint’s rough-hewn canvases often seemed quirkier and brasher than theirs. Today, her still notably quirky and brash pictures demand to be read differently. With their acerbic hues and fierce gestures, they can be seen as both affirmations of her belief in the power of intuitive, non-figurative painting and as non-ironic commentary on, say, Gerhard Richter’s simulacra of color-based, gestural abstraction. Tint’s aims haven’t changed, but the context for her work has, allowing—or—forcing us to consider it in new ways.

—Karen Wilkin

Francine Tint: *Irish Smoke*, 2007, acrylic on canvas, 34½ by 105 inches; at Tria.



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