

## JOHN KISSICK AND JENNIFER GORDON AT LEO KAMEN

By Gary Michael Dault

John Kissick's big, new abstract paintings are as lush and bountiful as one has come to expect from this gifted painter-teacher (Kissick is the director of the School of Fine Art and Music at the University of Guelph), only this time out, they're more lush and bountiful than ever.

This is probably because Kissick, who seems increasingly restless at this point in the trajectory of his production, has apparently striven to enliven his paintings with new imagistic tropes and an increasingly frayed and chaotic attack (well, a highly controlled chaotic attack). New in the works, for example, are spotted, octopus-like areas, intestine-like tubes slithering hither and yon, messy cage-like weavings of ropes of colour, black sack-like things that hang down menacingly into the fray -- all kinds of raucously tasteful new additions to his painterly vocabulary. And just in time, too.

For Montreal-based painter Jennifer Gordon, painting seems to be an intriguingly attenuated, amusingly mandarin practice ("The paintings aim to be quick, subjective and introspective", Gordon writes in her gallery statement. "I'm fully present for the staging of events and then I clear out."). The staging of events, as she puts it, is wry, engagingly eccentric and deeply fascinating. Paintings are both there and not there, as if the canvases had been touched lightly, and then regretfully and poignantly abandoned. The beautiful *Bloom*, for example, is prematurely (deliberately) cracked and, oh, I don't know, clouded or smoked somehow. *Double Rise* is a pale, watery phantom of high-rise construction, maybe. The brilliant *Betweenity* is a pale pink, punctuated grid that looks as if it wanted to be about geometry and construction and then just grew tired of the rigour of it all and retired. Some of them make you wish Gordon hadn't "cleared out" quite so soon. But then it's nice to be left alone with the fallout from her inventive visual imagination.

*The Kissicks are \$11,500 each. The Gordons are \$4,800 each. Until March 27, 80 Spadina Ave., Suite 406, Toronto; 416-504-9515.*

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