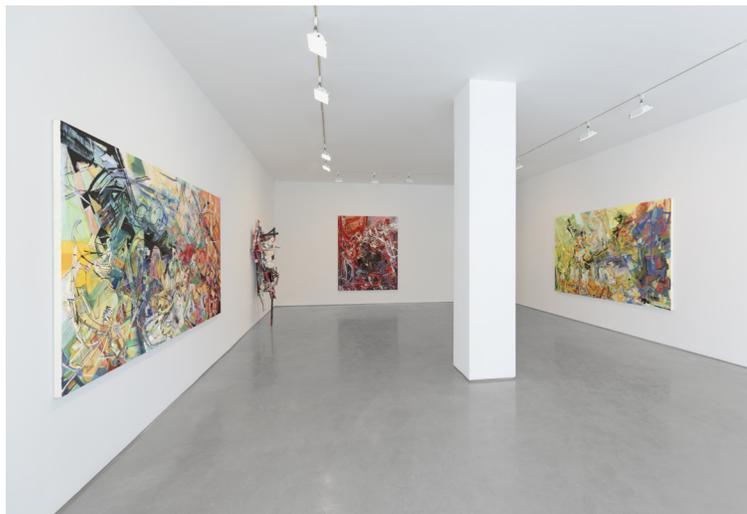


New American Paintings

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Iva Gueorguieva's Surface-Effect
By Nadiah Fellah

Iva Gueorguieva's (NAP #73) paintings, on view at Ameringer | McEnergy | Yohe in New York, bring a breathe of California sun to our frigid New York winter. Working up the surfaces of her large canvases into almost a fetishized frenzy, the paintings are abstract, yet indicative of movement. By denying viewers the ability to rest their eyes on any one component for too long, her works are both mesmerizing and disconcerting, inducing frustration as one tries to pinpoint figures or structures within the compositions. Fractions, edges, and suggestions of such imagery exist, but are ungraspable as they dissolve into the chaos of each scene.



Many of Gueorguieva's paintings bear suggestive titles that prompt possible allusions to their non-objective forms. In *American Vortex*, the composition is dominated by red, white and blue—colors that conjure the American flag. However, the artist has refuted any representations of the flag motif, perhaps gesturing to the countless other objects that bear the same color combination, and have become ingrained features of American culture—from NASCAR and gas stations to sports teams' paraphernalia and banners.

Titles make repeated reference to the swirling motion apparent in each piece, as in *Wave*, *Women and the Ocean*, as well as *American Vortex*. Titles also play off of art historical tropes, as in *Bathers*, which makes reference to Renoir's famous nineteenth-century painting. While Gueorguieva's does not depict any female nudes in an idyllic riverside scene, hers does evoke the same palette as the Renoir version. The blues, greens and yellows make reference to the sky, water, and wooded background to the image, while the peachy hue at center and towards the top of the canvas allude to the flesh of the nude women in the painting.

Although Gueorguieva's work engages with the history of art in subtle ways, her work also evinces aesthetic similarities to many other Los Angeles-based artists, particularly in her use of a brilliant color palette, and her tendency towards thin, attenuated forms, in both her paintings and sculpture. Artists like Lari Pittman, Elliot Hundley, and Liz Larner come to mind as others who operate in a similar visual tradition, and who value a more-is-more aesthetic strategy.

Within the exhibition of mostly large-scale works—and works that are incidentally scaled to the bodies of viewers, even while they emit no traces of the human form—are a suite of small-scale paintings. These works are fascinating in that they provide a glimpse into the artist's process, as the surfaces contain fewer components, and aren't as worked-up and developed as those of the larger works. In them we see the artist's remarkable talent as a colorist,

and the way she builds blocks of color sections across her canvas to a sumptuous effect. These works, while lacking the charge and momentum of the larger paintings, are a welcome change of pace for visitors, and a rare indication of how the artist's paintings develop.

Iva Gueorguieva is on view at Ameringer | McEnery | Yohe in New York through March 8th.

Iva Gueorguieva was born in 1974 in Bulgaria. She received an MFA from the Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia in 2000. She has had recent solo exhibitions at such venues as ACME in Los Angeles, CA; Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects, Los Angeles, CA; BravinLee Programs, New York, NY; LUX Art Institute, Encinitas, CA; Angles Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; Stichting Outline, Amsterdam, Netherlands; and Pomona Museum of Art, Claremont, CA. The artist lives and works in Los Angeles.

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