

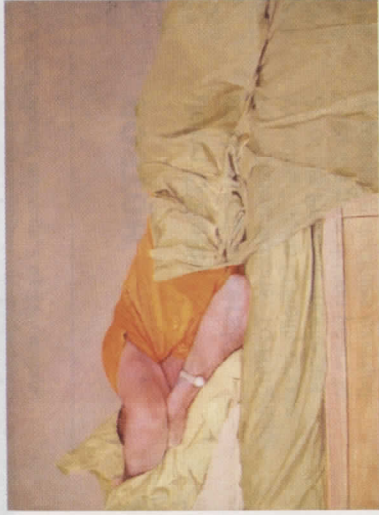
## Elizabeth Cooper at Thrust Projects

Elizabeth Cooper's fierce and funny paintings have for some years conflated the means of process-oriented abstraction and the compositional conventions of genre subjects. Although ultimately they describe nothing but themselves, landscape is the idiom under scrutiny in her new oil and enamel works, which consist of slick, glassy globs, crinkled splats and runny glazes, with a little crabbed, blunt brushwork providing textual variety. This application is bracingly direct and tightly controlled; Cooper conveys a sense of improvisation and invention, but nothing like abandon. Her faux gusto signifies expressionist exuberance but maintains a critical distance from it. So does her clean, clanging Pop palette, haltingly resplendent with primaries and secondaries and cloying decorative hues. The cumulative residue of deliberate, individuated actions, isolated in an expanse of a single, bald, hot color, possesses a clinical quality unnervingly at odds with the connotations of spilled paint.

All works are untitled

and dated 2006, and most are 6 feet or more in their larger dimension. In one, the dominant underlying hue is the color of a cherry lollipop. It presses forward, so the painting's pileup of pastel blobs, elongated daubs in shades of green, pools of white and yellow, and ribbons of rusty orange occupy more or less the same shallow space. A canny editor, Cooper has painted out complex, bulbous masses in the upper corners, which heightens the contrast of overstatement and restraint and anchors the action at the bottom edge. In fact, the visual inventory of each canvas appears to be subject to the force of gravity, settling toward the bottom of the picture, struggling to rise from it or, occasionally, dangling from above.

The surface of a vertical painting with a turquoise ground is particularly tactile. The viewer intent on seeking subject matter in the imbroglio might discern an elaborate hilltop outcropping of vegetation. Cooper plays with the illustrator's device of



Robert Feintuch: *Arm Over Face*, 2006, oil and polymer emulsion on honeycomb panel, 11 by 15 inches; at CRG.



Elizabeth Cooper: *Untitled*, 2006, oil and enamel on canvas, 60 by 72 inches; at Thrust Projects.

Callister as well. Cooper's color selection courts the arbitrary, but the dense gray ground of a lovely tondo—at 24 inches across, by far the smallest work in the show—is the perfect foil for lavender,

chalky green, pinkish, whitish and, again, orange ribbons, which migrate to or encroach from the bottom of the painting. This disarmingly commanding work shows that Cooper's approach lends itself to a variety of formats. It would be interesting to see the artist, having given the strictures of easel painting a sound thrashing, take on a more ambitious, even architectural, scale, which might differently challenge her considerable pictorial moxie.

—Stephen Maine

meander gently between foreground and background. These edges are marked with single and, sometimes, doubled lines, the dissonant colors of which give the faceless goo-forms an animated glow. All are rendered in a groovy, late-'60s style that blends tropical lushness, Peter Max and Marimekko to produce a sense of sexy fabulousness. Church riffs on those historical references with both playful irreverence and respect. Her avocado, lavender and melon color schemes serve a confectionery, fabric-design imagination.

*Hangin' Garden* (2004) features two blob-clusters on either side of a turquoise chasm. The orange contours around certain parts lend them warmth, and even the suggestion of primitive awareness. *Tangled Web* (2006) is a world of