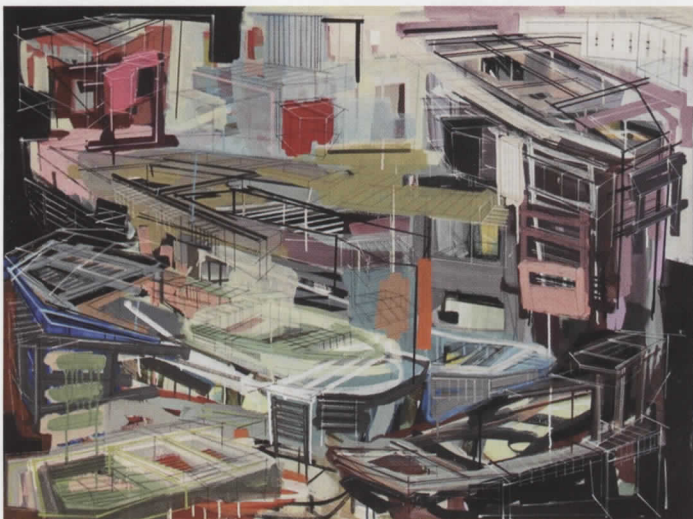


Denyse Thomasos: *Lollipop Nation*, 2009, acrylic on canvas, 40 by 54 inches; at Lennon, Weinberg.



Blaché—a woman who broke ground in her work and placed art at the center of her life.

—Lyra Kilston

## DENYSE THOMASOS LENNON, WEINBERG

In "The Divide: New Paintings," her first solo exhibition in New York in a decade, Trinidad-born, New York-based Denyse Thomasos presented 10 paintings (all acrylic on canvas, 2009). Each envelops components of a metastasizing metropolis in an expansive, hyperbolic space. Not castles in the air but housing blocks, bunkers and warehouses, the structures loom and dissolve like ghosts or memories. The artist's forebears include Futurist prophets of the cult of the machine as well as such boulevard Cubists as Robert Delaunay and Lyonel Feininger, who heard a crazy heart thumping beneath the rational facade of urban architecture.

The palette of Thomasos's *Nesting* is typical, rooted in neutralized secondary hues and inflected earth colors with the occasional flare-up of turquoise, rosy pink, blue or yellow. The artist integrates black and white into her palette with a rare confidence. Her bouquets of perspectival orthogonals cohere, at bottom right, into a shape suggesting the curve of a boat's hull. Thomasos often pulls back from the edges and corners, going a bit soft there relative to the graphical tautness of her paintings' centers. Even where corners are firm, as in *Lollipop Nation*, the viewer regards the profusion of forms from something of an elevated vantage point.

*Inca Matrix* scrambles judicious smears of paint, glassy transparencies

and the kind of precise, generic diagrams you might see in the later chapters of a textbook on perspective. In this work and others, Thomasos employs a classic technique of pre-CAD rendering: the line fattens where the hand slows, expressing strength close to the joint of post and beam. The busted or skewed grid has been a staple of abstract painting from Jack Tworokov and Al Held to Al Loving and Jack Whitten, but Thomasos brings a lovely, lilting take to the contest between freedom and restraint.

On a wall-mounted monitor, a video slide show looped the artist's "visual research": vernacular and sacred architecture in Mali, Senegal, Cambodia and China, plus slave ships, super-max prisons, abatoirs. Doubtless meant to be helpful, the decision to display these images undermined the integrity of the paintings by divulging sources, suggesting that the artist is less than fully confident in her work, or in her audience's ability to respond to it intelligently. It also signaled that Thomasos wishes to guide, if not control, the viewer's interpretation. Nothing wrong with that. But if the display of research material signals an interest in the sociopolitical implications of architectural form, it would be expressed more effectively in the paintings themselves.

—Stephen Maine

## PETER PERI BORTOLAMI

The tropes taken up by Peter Peri, a young British artist, are esoteric (cult objects; the career of his Constructivist grandfather) and unlikely (impossible