

KINZ, TILLOU + FEIGEN



Jennifer Coates

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Jennifer Coates's fascinating new works unite two modes of painting born of very different techniques and materials and even, it seems, states of mind. Together, however, the styles successfully interact with and enrich each other, and above all, tell a good story.

The first stage in these works, the backdrop, is an abstract soup that creates an illusion of space—it can suggest the ocean's depths, as in *The Spangle Maker* (2008) and *Thoughts for Naught* (2008); the night skies, as in *Aurora* (2008) and *Poundland* (2008); or a snowy vignette, as in *Polar Shift* (2008). These effects are created using some of the methods of Abstract Expressionism—especially, pouring onto and swabbing a horizontal canvas. Coates applies overlapping tones of glaze with viscosities ranging from heavy syrup to thin broth, often resulting in a cloudy swirl.

In the second stage, Coates applies paint in a very different manner, using a small brush to produce a colorful web of sharply defined geometric forms. *The Spangle Maker* is colonized by fizzling bioluminescent spheres. *Aurora* contains a biomass that grows out of a structural web filled with a variety of faceted shapes. *Polar Shift* has a tangle of nematodes and rubbery beans reminiscent of the animated film *Yellow Submarine*.

The two styles are conjoined at crucial points in the pictures and establish a dramatic tension as the forms try to emerge from the muck of space; there is an undercurrent of disturbance. These intriguing paintings hint at nothing less than the emergence of a new life force.

-Elliott Green

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