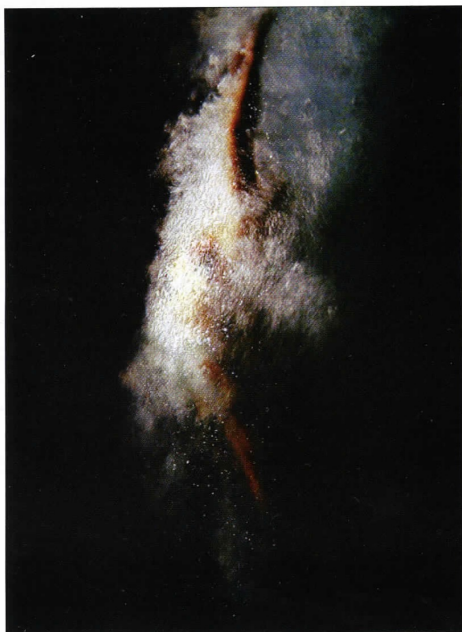


Eric Zener

Hespe
San Francisco

Eric Zener's new work embraces the current fashion for using resin and gold leaf—the pictorial equivalent of bling. The photographs of single swimmers that, in the past, he used only as inspiration for paintings, are now the substance of his work. Using a photo-transfer process, Zener lays images on top of silver- or gold-leafed panels, which he covers with layers of acrylic resin. Between each layer he paints in oils—veils of bubbles, the edge of a bathing suit—like color separations in commercial printing. (Zener's process was influenced by a recent printmaking residency at San Francisco's Trillium Press.)

Arguably the resin, with its clarity and shine, is a more apt stand-in for water than viscous oil paint. And perhaps the light reflected by gold leaf better evokes the warmth of sunlight broken into patterns by waves than does brushed paint on canvas. But there is an effortless quality to the works that makes them extremely seductive, and at the same time overly slick. They lack the struggle and eloquent clumsiness that made Zener's earlier paintings of water and swimmers so memorable. The strangeness



Eric Zener, *Bursting*, 2008, mixed media on panel, 41" x 30".
Hespe.

is gone from his work, as is the emotional punch.

In *Bursting* (2008), the image of the bather is almost incidental, hidden within a cloud of bubbles that is the focus of the picture. In *Ascending* (2008), showing a swimmer half-obscured by bubbles, Zener appears to be reaching for some kind of transfiguration.

The "Treading Water" series (2007) pushes further. In this set, composed of smaller-scale works shot in a dark pool and lit by a single underwater source, Zener destroys the form of the swimmer with light. In each of the images, the figure is abstracted, blurred and doubled by its reflection on the surface. These works convey a cool, emotional distance and a sense of isolation.

—Lea Feinstein

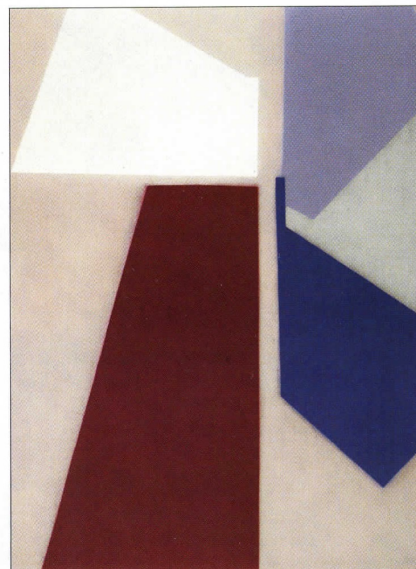
Suzanne Caporael

Richard Gray
Chicago

The road trip, that classic American rite of passage, formed the basis for this recent body of work, shown under the title "Going." While driving across the country, Caporael, who does not paint when on the road, found amusement cutting out advertisements from the *New York Times*. In the evenings she sat in her motel room extracting just the solid blocks of color and rearranging them on the white pages of her journal.

Back at home in upstate New York, Caporael photographed, scanned, and enlarged these shapes to create building blocks for digital collages, which became templates for her paintings. Nearly always working on a light gray ground, she manipulates the edges of the cut shapes, either blurring their perimeters or heightening them with very fine lines painted in slightly deeper hues.

When Caporael started painting these arrangements she found that they evoked places she had encountered on her trip, and each work in this



Suzanne Caporael, *581 (Nappanee, Indiana)*, 2008, oil on linen, 72" x 54". Richard Gray.

series of 23 paintings is titled with the name of a city or natural landmark. In *581 (Nappanee, Indiana)*, 2008, bladelike shapes in rust, blue, and white are arranged on a background like the sails on a windmill, an iconic structure in that Amish town. In *586 (Vermillion, South Dakota)*, 2008, a navy blue bridgelike form spans the canvas horizontally, dividing a snaking river in pink and powder blue.

Since emerging on the art scene in the late '70s, Caporael has drawn inspiration from the landscape, from bodies of water, from trees. Continuing the clean, minimal approach of her past work, these simple, spare compositions achieve a quiet perfection.

—Ruth Lopez

'25/25'

Jerald Melberg
Charlotte, North Carolina

This show, subtitled "Celebrating 25 Years and 25 Artists," marked the gallery's quarter-century anniversary and also functioned as a kind of autobiography of the dealer by invoking his relationships with artists. Paintings by Wolf Kahn and Ida Kohlmeyer recalled a time when Melberg curated exhibitions of their work at the city's Mint Museum of Art. The late Romare Bearden, a Charlotte native, has been with the gallery since its doors opened, three locations