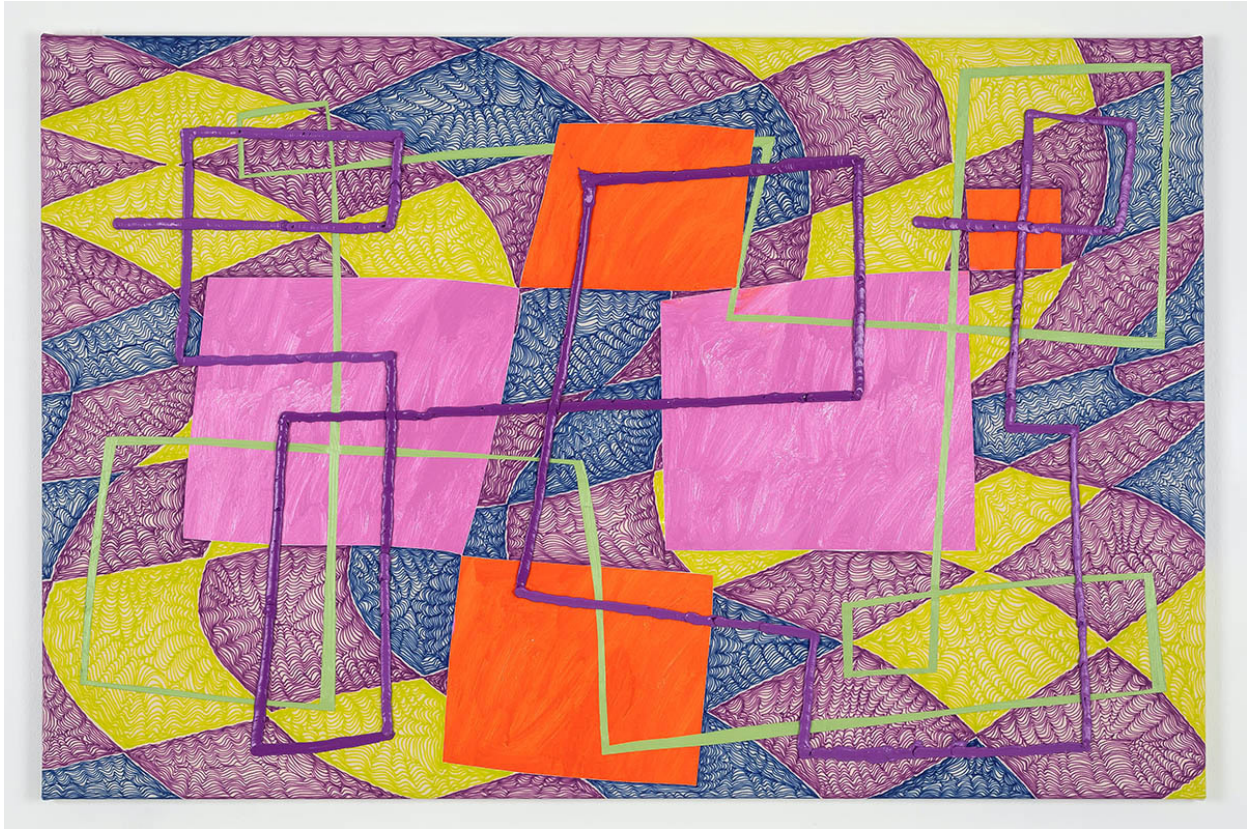


## Trudy Benson. Plastic Paintings



*Twinning*, 2023, acrylic and oil on canvas, 86×132 cm.

Trudy Benson, an American painter based in New York, shows a new series completed at a residency with Galerie Krinzinger in Vienna. This group of works, which she calls “Plastic Paintings” were started in her home studio, rolled up, transported abroad, and finished in the same sunny atelier where they are now exhibited. “The space was so beautiful and inspiring,” says Benson, who enjoyed hearing the birds in the quiet courtyard outside. “It ended up working out kind of perfectly for the amount, scale and shape of the paintings I brought.”

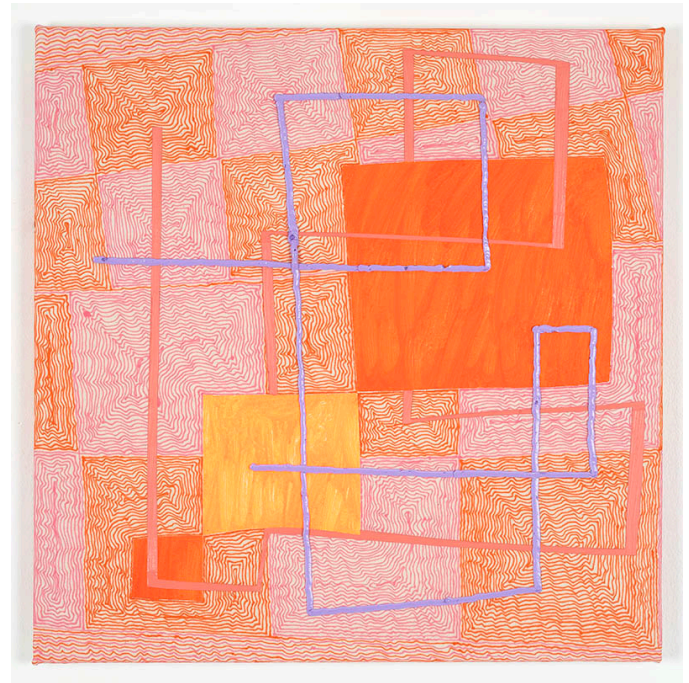
### REVIEW: LAUREN NICKOU

Benson is known for her ability to pack a punch with colors that reverberate against each other, hazy lines that hit against sharp edges, and an off-the-grid use of rectangles and squares. She pays homage to artists like Piet Mondrian and Josef Albers, riffing on reinterpretations of Neo-Plasticism with an expanded palette, illusive optics, and adventurous material handling. This new series presents mainly monochromatic paintings that subtly reference primary colors, knocked against dark gray to make them pop.

“From Vienna with Love” hits high notes of lemon and canary, and was inspired by a graffiti-ed tag in two shades of yellow right outside the gallery’s door that Benson passed daily. “Ping” is true blue, giving off static like from an old television set. “And” from afar reads as a reddish bundle of peaches, yet up close its delicate lavender overlay makes the eye stare as though trying to solve a Magic Eye puzzle. “The hardest part of painting for me is finishing the painting,” says Benson, “because the last color seems to be really important.”

She adds to this primary color family a splash of tertiary wild cards to amp up the conversation. “Twinning” is a complex maze of chartreuse, permanent orange, bubblegum pink, lime green, bruised purple and blue. My eye falls into this wacky grid and can’t get out again, as Benson masterfully concocts a system of illusory depths that play tricks on our perception. “I like having an optical effect in the paintings that changes from different distances,” she says. “Sprayed lines have that blurry and fuzzy quality, but from far away become more muted. Hard lines come forward in space. It’s about how we see.”

Benson’s “Plastic Paintings” are reminiscent of an Easter egg hunt, or a castle made from pastel Legos. I find myself getting pulled in and swirled around, but at the same time, standing still and searching for my own careful path through each piece. Like in a game of Chutes and Ladders, Benson’s work gives us options for where and how to travel, and at what speed, yet we stay grounded on a foundational grid. “Albers adheres to these rigid parameters, but becomes playful with color,” says Benson, whose work grants the viewer some type of ultimate visual freedom. “I’m interested in painting that takes you somewhere.”



*And*, 2023, acrylic and oil on canvas, 60×60 cm.

**Trudy Benson**  
**“Plastic Paintings”**  
**through July 28, 2023**

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