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Kristan Kennedy at Soloway

by Noah Dillon



Kristan Kennedy, *T.R.N.T.*, 2014. sumi, dye, gesso, aluminum, enamel on linen, 48 x 73 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Soloway Gallery.

The press release for “Kristan Kennedy Meets a Clock,” at Brooklyn’s Soloway gallery, defiantly proclaims, “All the paintings have been made, even the embarrassing ones.” *T.R.N.T.* (2014) is one of those on view that refers less explicitly to bodies, though all the works are rather haptic. Kennedy, a Portland-based artist, here nods to textiles and, more, to gendered divisions of labor. After staining and collaging on sheets of linen with ink, enamel, aluminum or other materials, Kennedy throws her paintings into the washing machine to age them via an aleatory gesture weighted with feminist overtones. Her mark making owes something to Expressionism, but she has rinsed Romantic melodrama from the whole endeavor, leaving exuberance and snarky fun in its wake. The resulting brushy and weathered images are hung unstretched and loose — others are draped over an austere brass armature that hugs the wall before projecting into the gallery’s space. There’s something sensuous in *T.R.N.T.*’s splayed diptych, conjoined at the bottom by a tenuous connection. On the left, the painting is scrawled with dense black lines like manically ruled notebook paper; on the right, curving and looping gestures in on a yellow field serve as more contemplative counterpoints. The piece droops, stretching languidly. It’s smart and erotic and not too pithy. Certainly there’s no reason to be embarrassed of it. NOAH DILLON

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