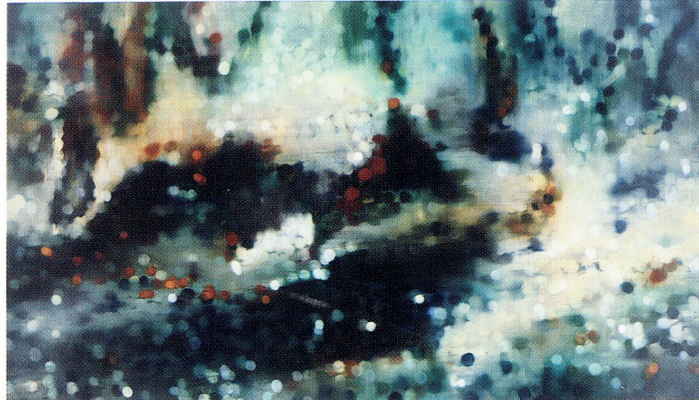


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Angelina Nasso at Stux - New York

Joe Fyfe

The strategy of replicating the out-of-focus effects produced by film and photography is attractive to painters who want to suggest a world hovering between abstraction and representation. One thinks, for example, of Gerhard Richter's technique of suspending photo-based imagery in a fuzzy glaze of oil and varnish. Ross Bleckner, the primary adapter of this technique to abstraction, also



Angelina Nasso: *Malkuth*, 2003, oil on canvas, 83 by 145 inches; at Stux.

comes to mind, as does Eric Fischl, with his use of selective blurring. Indebted to Richter, Angelina Nasso's recent paintings are less imagistic than Fischl's and have a deeper, more atmospheric space than Bleckner's.

Nasso's distinctly handmade pictures, which depict an abundance of liquid, semitransparent discs suspended in painting medium, depend on transparent oil as much as on colored pigment. The shapes seem to float on the surface like petals on a deep pond. Virtually all the paintings have black grounds (visible between the disc shapes) that make them appear to be set at night. The titles (*Domain*, *And Then I*, *Vibe*, *The Habit of Love*) could be names for designer perfumes. The paintings look elegant and mysterious, but Nasso appears to have no respect for easy beauty. Instead, her work feels hard-won, the result of a struggle between the artist and her greasy, recalcitrant materials.

Most of the imagery, embedded as it is in pixelated soft focus, seems to make reference to nature. Nasso will sometimes explore a limited range of colors, such as the violets and blues that dominate *Domain* (2002, 78 by 82 inches). In other works she evokes an entire summer forest full of variegated color, such as in the rich whites, reds, evergreens and burnt browns of *Malkuth* (2003, 83 by 145 inches). It's almost as if the artist begins to explore the pictorial space that she will be working with in darkness and then sets off colored flashbulbs to find her way around. Nasso has probably not yet arrived at her signature style, but she is more firmly located in the reality of her painted world than many young artists. You can feel the solidity of her achievement here.