



LEAH DURNER



goldgreygreenpinkbrown pour, 2012  
poured latex enamel on canvas, 48 x 36 in 121.92 x 91.44 cm

# Leah Durner on her poured enamels and on the FairFolks context

My work in poured enamel references psychedelia and process art with deeper roots in the exuberance of the Baroque and Rococo as well as in the modernist tradition of abstraction.

My primary inspiration is the history of painterly painting extending back to the great Venetians and Spaniards. More immediately, I am inspired by the vibrancy and density of New York City and its amazing people—the visual richness all around—as well as the psychedelic color and design of the 1960s and 70s. I read extensively, visit museums and art galleries, clothing and design stores, hardware stores, churches, libraries...etc! Since childhood, I have had a strong interest in art, fashion, film, music, literature, history, philosophy, architecture, and design—and from these sources I have built a tremendously rich treasure of reference material.

My eyes are open for surprising/beautiful/ugly/jolting/sickly/pretty etc. combinations of color and surface and I take notes and photographs to build my personal color library. My poured enamels may be based on the colors from graffitied trucks, construction sites, fashion (I have done paintings based on Miuccia Prada's collections), street signs, etc. Two of the poured enamels at Fair Folks are based on cover designs from the September/October 2011 and November/December 2011 issues of *Frame* magazine.

The color selection for each painting is strongly determined—in the studio I spend a great deal of time mixing color—my primary concern and where the main decisions are made. Indeterminacy and accident enter when pouring the enamels—an active and physical process during which I must remain totally focused and uninterrupted as the colors flow to become the final painting.

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When Aurora Stokowski invited me to be the featured artist for the opening of Fair Folks' Houston Street location, I was delighted to participate in a new community space/coffee house that combined art, design, and fashion. I knew Fair Folks & a Goat from their earlier incarnation on 88<sup>th</sup> Street and Fifth Avenue and greatly admired the way Aurora and Anthony Mazzei combined art, furniture, objects, fashion, and jewelry into a total space for community.

Anthony's characterization of Fair Folks as "a magazine you walk through rather than read" is compelling because I am strongly influenced by magazines. Reading Diana Vreeland-period *Vogue* as a child was a foundational inspiration. The photographs of Richard Avedon (and others) and the amazingly unusual models—Veruschka and Penelope Tree, among others—opened my eyes to life beyond a small town. *Frame*, *Surface*, *Corduroy*, *AnOther*, *Garage*, *Bunch*, and *Man About Town* are just a few of the current magazines that interest me. As a huge fan of drawings and works on paper I miss the now-closed *Art on Paper*: beautifully designed, it employed expanses of open space in its layout.

I am inspired by spaces—full, living interiors—where art and design create a larger meaning. I also appreciate the historical significance of coffee houses as places where artistic, philosophical, and political ideas and actions are initiated in face-to-face conversations among physically present persons! These and my long-time studies in phenomenology and incarnated consciousness make me a passionate partisan for Being Truly Present!

- Leah Durner New York October 2012

Leah Durner has had solo exhibitions of her work at Loretta Howard Gallery (2012), 571 Projects (2011), Nye Basham Studio (2009), Wooster Arts Space (2006, New York solo debut), Berry College (2005), and Limbo (1999). Durner's work has been included in group exhibitions at Winston Wächter Fine Art (2011), The Convent (2009), Art Gotham (2005), Cazenovia College (2005) with Julie Evans and others, Barbara Ann Levy Gallery (2000), Markham Murray Gallery (1999), Steinbaum Kraus Gallery (1997), CBs 313 Gallery (1992), Coup de Grace Gallery (1991 and 1989) with Karen Finley, Barbara Kruger, Nancy Spero, Jenny Holzer, Kay Rosen and others, SoHo Center for Visual Arts with Glenn Ligon and others (1991), Wake Forest University (1994 and 1990), and City Without Walls (1986, 1987, and 1988). Durner was an artist-in-residence at the Leighton Studios, Banff Centre for the Arts. Durner has also curated exhibitions, published art theory, and lectured on a number of topics, including the American landscape; gestural abstraction and phenomenology; conceptualism and its sources; Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* and art, money, and gender; the work of the artist Dan Graham; and the work of composers Maryanne Amacher and John Cage. Durner's current theoretical interests include beauty, joy, largesse, and incarnated consciousness. Critics and scholars who have written on Durner's work include: David Cohen (critic and *artcritical* publisher); John Yau (poet and critic); Jorella Andrews (Head of the Department of Visual Cultures, Goldsmiths, University of London); and Michael Sanders (philosopher). Durner earned her B.A. from Wake Forest University and her M.F.A. from Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University where she studied art theory with Martha Rosler, performance with Geoff Hendricks, and painting with Leon Golub. Durner lives and works in New York City.

Fair Folks & a Goat is a membership cafe, art and design gallery, and space for community and events owned by Aurora Stokowski and Anthony Mazzei. Fair Folks Cafe is located at 96 West Houston Street in New York.

front cover: *whitesilvioletbeige pour*, 2011  
poured latex enamel on canvas, 60 x 48 in 152.2 x 121.92 cm  
back cover: *gunmetalplatinumvioletbeigeblue pour*, 2012  
poured latex enamel on canvas, 60 x 48 in 152.2 x 121.92 cm



*pinkgreygreendarkredblue pour*, 2012  
poured latex enamel on canvas, 48 x 36 in 121.92 x 91.44 cm

at Fair Folks



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