



Leah Durner *Untitled (orange)* 2006 acrylic on paper 87 x 60 in 220.98 x 152.4 cm

Paper cut roughly from the roll; strokes of paint

barely bounded and incompletely covering the naked paper surface; paint running by force of gravity and scattering drops along the bottom edge of the sheet; overlapping, brushed out, and smeared color applied opaquely and transparently; color that is in places sweet, sonorous, or sickly; minimal materials (just pencil and paint, paper, brush, and knife); and baroque sensibility (a lifetime of, among other things, painting, drawing, looking, reading, thinking, speaking, listening, laughing, crying, praying)—it is impossible to be cool when every day the messy reality of life is calling out to be met.

The paintings each have a completeness that seems to be contradicted by their casual craftsmanship. Into each painting is poured the complete attention and physical strength of the artist and that already mentioned lifetime of painting.

The paintings are informed by the historical tradition of the painterly—extending back to the Venetians of the Renaissance, through the American Abstract Expressionists and up to today in the trend of extreme abstraction.

Fashion as an art also informs the paintings—the “sick color” of Miuccia Prada’s Spring 1996 collection was especially influential in daring to be ugly-beautiful. And the dandy—who stood before the mirror tying, undoing, and retying his cravat until he had achieved the perfect appearance of carelessness—is an older brother who reminds us to refuse the laborious and to look over there where... *Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté, luxe, calme et volupté.*

Leah Durner
On certain of my works on paper
New York 2005