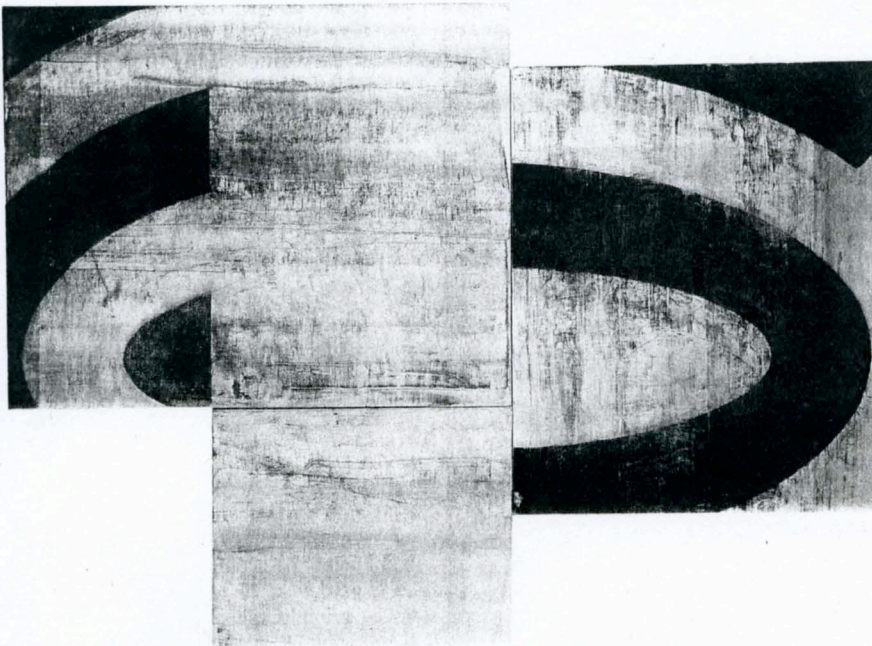


JOHN
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158



David Row, *Clink*, 1990, oil and wax on canvas, 86 by 115½ inches. John Good.

DAVID ROW

John Good

The acidic pinks and greens in some of these paintings were at first disconcerting, but with a little more looking this seemed like the best work David Row has ever done. After a few years of making essentially monochromatic paintings, Row's return to a wider range of color has helped pull him back from the abyss of becoming a mannerist of his own style. The narrow borders of drips that Row used to leave at the bottom of his paintings are absent here, and it is a relief to be rid of them. Notable in the new paintings is the appearance of wear and tear on the obsessively scraped and pulled surfaces. While scaling up the geometric forms in his paintings, Row seems also to have scaled up the surface and visual noise. As a result, although these are paintings that can eat up a attention of the viewer.

The jarring pinks, greens, and yellows in *Tropicana* are, in fact, Row's homage to de Kooning's mid-'40s paintings, such as *Queen of Hearts* and *Pink Lady*. This kind of respectful transformation is perhaps another of Row's methods, if one recalls his long redeployment of Brancusi's *Endless Column*.³ Like most of the works in the show, *Tropicana* is composed of three abutting panels. In a number of other paintings, Row has arranged things so that one of the panels is a pink or green or yellow monochrome, threatening to detach itself and go floating off on its own, but it is a sign of Row's present confidence that he does not make this into a formula. Many may be tempted to match these paintings against two other abstract painters, Sean Scully and David Reed. Free from the muscular overkill that afflicts the former, less rarefied and more varied than the latter, the slow collisions of David Row's distinctive style have never been more compelling. —M. R. R.

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