

Judith Belzer, *The Inner Life of Trees #1*, 2007, oil on canvas (diptych), 20" x 136". Morgan Lehman.

Delaunay, Fernand Léger, and the Italian Futurist Umberto Boccioni, Nespolo has mixed these influences to arrive at a distinctive, contemporary style.

Nespolo works with a vivid palette, whether he is painting on wood or designing embroidered canvases. Figures are often set against art, as in the wonderful embroidered *Still Andy* (2007), which features a man with a dog on a leash, standing before a series of Warhol flower paintings. The dog peers balefully out of the picture, his shadow mingling with his owner's.

Particularly in *Solitude* (2007), in which three figures wander through a contemporary gallery, Nespolo proves himself a master of stylistic illusion. Although they have no facial features, they are individualized by the slope of their shoulders or tilt of their heads. Similarly, in *Sol-Met* (2007), two men gaze on a Sol LeWittian installation of swirling colors. A happy homage to the Pop gods, *Pop Time* (2007) depicts a woman and child caught between two full walls of wild color. The figures' stillness provides an amusing contrast to the excitement on the walls that almost overpowers them. Celebrating the sheer dynamism of art, Nespolo may also be implying that art is more alive than its viewers. —Valerie Gladstone

Ekatherina S.

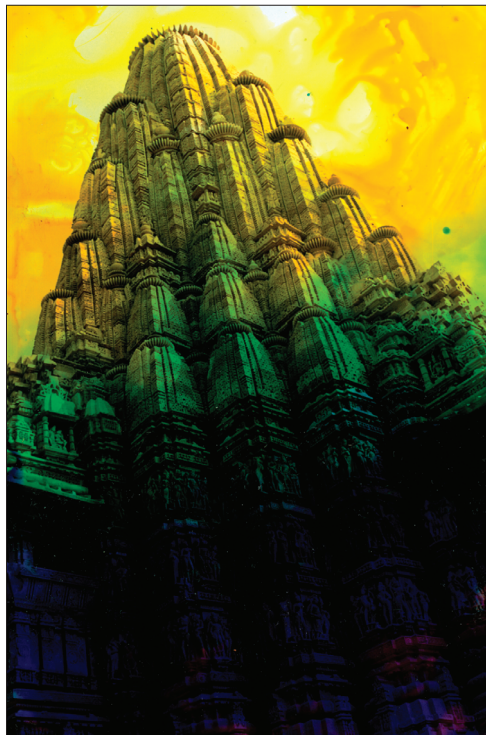
Jain Marounouchi

Born in Russia, Ekatherina S., as she calls herself, lives in Germany and New York, and has exhibited in both the United States and in Europe. Most recently, she spent time in India, becoming familiar with and photographing the country's great spiritual centers. She uses these photographs as the basis for these stunning, brilliantly colored works (all 2008). By painting over images of classic temples and robustly carved stat-

ues, she imbues them with an otherworldliness, often adding lines of calligraphy or graffiti to intensify the mystery.

In the deep pink-purple *India 1*, the frieze of voluptuous goddesses, photographed from below, is interrupted by squiggly white childlike tracings that bring the scene up to date and subtly unify past and present. More majestic and almost humbling, *India 11*—which along with *India 7* is among the most gorgeous works in the exhibition—shows an elaborate temple soaring from deep blue into a golden light. Oddly, the paintings conjure up a futuristic landscape as much as they do an ancient one, and this may be the artist's objective. She has chosen a very tantalizing and seductive way for viewers to see India, not so much as a geographical place but as a richly layered and nourishing state of mind.

—Valerie Gladstone



Ekatherina S., *India 7*, 2008, painted photograph, 35½" x 23½". Jain Marounouchi.

Judith Belzer

Morgan Lehman

The small canvases in Judith Belzer's exhibition "The Inner Life of Trees" were filled to the edges with dynamic swells and currents based on the graphic patterning of wood grains. These baroque, striated forms—tightly cropped and almost claustrophobic—suggested close-ups of fur, water, eyes, sand, feathers, and sky as well as trees, and they underscored the sense of a universal life force coursing through nature.

Belzer, who lives in northern California, based this series on eucalyptus trees, a dominant presence in her landscape. Beautiful and majestic, the eucalyptus is also highly invasive and flammable, contributing to the region's devastating fires. Belzer skillfully captures the tree's contradictory associations in these engaging, suffocating pictures. Avoiding the picturesque and eliminating any horizon or sense of a wider context, she pulls in very close to her subject.

A series of four small canvases in parched shades of ochre and brown evoked more of a desert topography, with swirls recalling volcanic formations, nipples, and crevasses. Another grouping of six works in a luminous palette gave an impression of atmospheric events—heroic cloud formations, a sunset reflected on water—that on closer inspection yielded to the rhythms of the wood grain. Belzer is clearly fascinated by the repetitive patterns in nature and how they parallel our own.

—Hilarie M. Sheets

Lucrecia Troncoso

Garson Baker Fine Art

Paper towels are surprisingly elegant and expressive in the hands of Lucrecia Troncoso. While most artists might use them to blot, dry, or clean, she makes delicate paintings and sculptures with them. In the same vein, favoring nail polish or food coloring over paint, the artist transforms the commonplace—even the