

## David Salle

Skarstedt

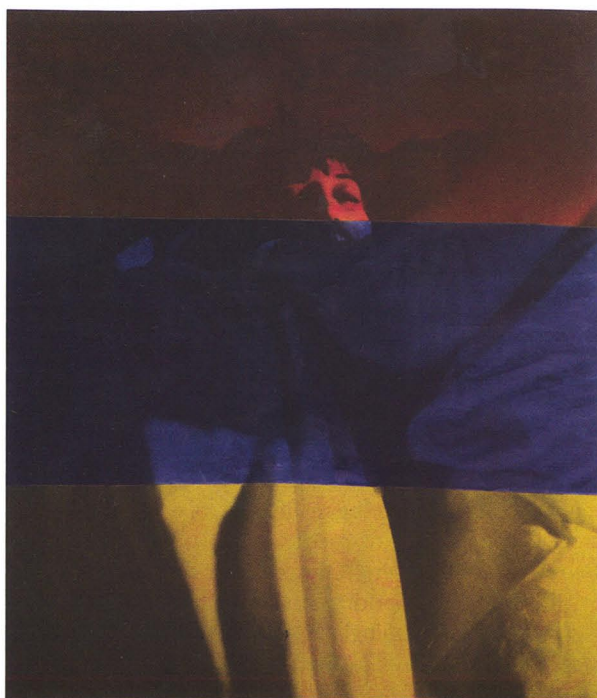
Created in 1992, but first shown last summer at the Arts Club of Chicago, this series of paintings—actually composed of “ink on photosensitized linen”—was an exciting experiment combining painting, photography, and performance. Salle’s point of departure in these works, titled “Ghost Paintings,” is a woman whirling fabric as she moves. She is then photographed, relocated to the canvas, and overlaid with bands of color that divide the total image into three parts.

What is fascinating in these works is Salle’s variation on the ancient *trompe l’oeil* tradition. By consciously manipulating our perception of depth through the folds of cloth, he evokes the 17th-century Spaniard Zurbarán, whose saints, martyrs, and clerics are draped in luxurious, sensuous fabrics. The most arresting image, *Ghost 14*, in which an ecstatic female face appears in the upper third of the picture, sends our imaginations back to images of Salome—from the Renaissance to Aubrey Beardsley—though the absence of St. John’s head leaves us wondering if the dancer is sad, glad, or mad. But the notion of sacrifice is relevant here, because Salle sacrifices motion and photographic realism to the abstraction of painting.

*Ghost 1* (there are 14 paintings in the series, but *Ghost 8* is in private hands) moves away from psychology because it seems to represent a partly unfurled flag. The colors, however, do not belong to the banner but to the superimposition of red, white, and blue on the basic image. In this sense, *Ghost 12*, in black and white, presents the starkest version, and sends the viewer to the sculpted-marble cloth of Bernini’s St. Teresa. Perhaps the most abstract image was *Ghost 2*, with its play of black, yellow, and orange, colors suggestive of Clyfford Still.

Salle packs an enormous amount of information into this intriguing series.

—Alfred Mac Adam



David Salle, *Ghost 14*, 1992, ink on photosensitized linen, 85" x 75". Skarstedt.

## Gregory Amenoff

Alexandre

The loamy fragrance of the countryside has for many years clung to Gregory Amenoff’s brawny, rustic form of neo-modernism, and in the eleven oil-on-canvas paintings and 25 colored-pencil drawings constituting this show, subtitled

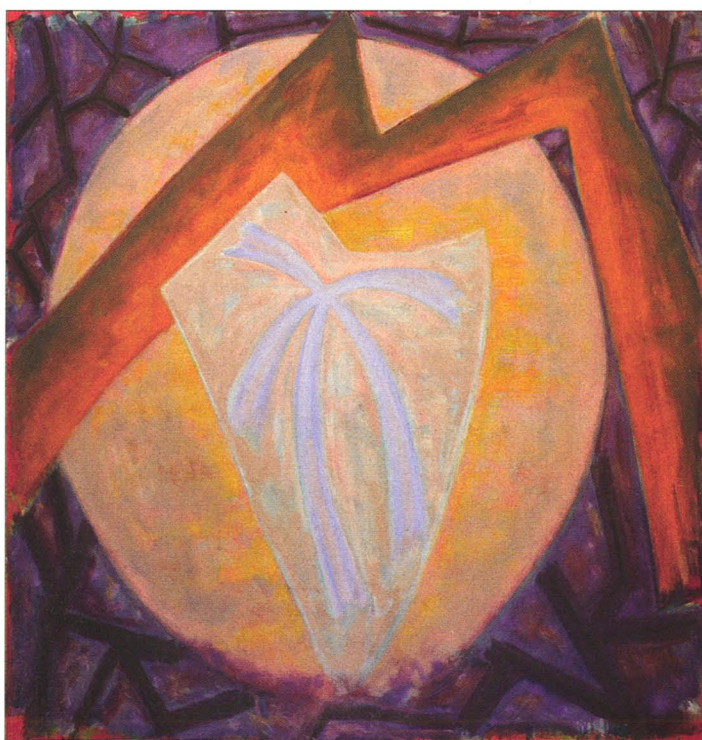
“Trace: Paintings and Drawings,” that scent was blended with a Symbolist perfume. In *Odilon* (2013), a peach-colored halo surrounds a radiant, shield- or shard-like shape; a jagged bolt of orange creases the painting before merging with encroaching shadows. The title presumably refers to Redon, and the image hints at the relation of brute materiality to higher states of consciousness.

At 84 by 76 inches, *Kronos II* (2012) was the largest of the works here, and it sustained the metaphysical tone in its vertical bifurcation. The haloed shield appears again—shaped differently, but with its heraldic design of intersecting arcs intact. The lower section of the canvas is a brooding, slightly sinister, and altogether enticing underworld inhabited by undulating purple fronds. Amenoff structures his paintings chromatically, with clanging contrasts of value. *The Wish* (2012), for example, is built on a central scaffolding of dark-plum bars, within or beyond which is a swarming cloudscape of pale yellow and blue-gray. This ethereal region is surrounded by earthier passages connoting creeping vines, warm soil, and cold rock.

Twenty-five colored-pencil drawings, all dated 2012, were evidently preparatory. Although most were no larger than 16 by 13 inches, they nearly stole the show. *Untitled Study #7*, in which butterflies emerge from a root-choked greensward, is

more exciting than the painting to which it relates (the 30-by-30-inch *Pageant*, 2013) in part because it lacks one of this painter’s conspicuous ticks: daubing adjacent shapes with a common opaque tint. The drawings require no such procedure. They are luminous, tough, and beautiful.

—Stephen Maine



Gregory Amenoff, *Odilon*, 2013, oil on canvas, 66" x 64". Alexandre.