



"OCEAN PAINTING NO. 6," 2010
Willy Heeks
 ACRYLIC AND OIL ON CANVAS
 74" x 77"
 PHOTO: COURTESY SCOTT WHITE CONTEMPORARY ART

the artist's earlier figurative works of couples sensuously embracing. *Berenjena Naranja*, a smaller painting of an orange-hued eggplant against a tomato-red background, with abstract strokes brushing the canvas, is more meditative, bringing to mind a lone individual contemplating life; it recalls Sinclair's earlier figurative paintings of singular people.

Both *Luna Pequena* (meaning "Little Moon"), of an opaque moon against a field of black, and *Untitled 1*, in yellow, orange and purple, also against a large swath of black, are more clearly abstract. *Pera*, a single, yellow-toned pear with the addition of a horizontal piece of burlap on the canvas, brings the viewer back to the figurative, this time with a small collage element. Sinclair, who has exhibited for more than four decades in several countries, draws on a long legacy in her work. This includes growing up with a famous artist father in Latin America; early and continual formal art training; extensive soul-searching and spiritual pursuits; worldwide travel; and, now, profound self-confidence. She paints bravely and boldly, without being in your face, drawing the viewer in with balance among shapes, colors, lines and mood, creating warmth and intimacy in even the most abstract pieces. These works can be viewed on many levels—from the immediate enjoyment of abstraction, and of their conceptual aspects, to appreciation of their creative depiction and coloration of familiar shapes.

—LIZ GOLDNER

SAN DIEGO
Willy Heeks: "Ocean House Paintings"
at Scott White Contemporary Art

While as recently as 2008 the work of American abstract painter Willy Heeks was

far more earth-bound, done on opaque wood panels featuring the occasional arboreal silhouette, the canvases from his latest solo show (all from 2010) have decidedly set sail. The title of the exhibition—"Ocean House Paintings"—suggests the sea in no uncertain terms and the influence shows, situating these paintings neatly in the brine.

In a single painting, like *Ocean Painting No. 6* or *Poet*, Heeks can float in calm waters via large light planes of liquid stains before conjuring a tempest through layers of gesture, form, and furiously applied paint. Contours of varying thickness wend their way through the picture plane, working to stabilize, if only momentarily, the otherwise prevailing oceanic chaos. These lines also have, at times, the uncanny effect of dragging the entire scene underwater with their suggestions of coral formations or vague hints of sea creatures. Perspectives vary; at different intervals the viewer may wonder if he or she is set in the sky looking down at the water or on a cliff looking out across it while at other moments the frame seems to be altogether underneath the surface in assorted orientations. The result is a kind of visual vertigo that gets reinforced by an unhinged network of movement and bearing. All of this is facilitated through an unpretentiously bright color scheme, with highbrow earth tones being washed away by a luminescent spectrum of violets, yellows, and ultramarine.

On the one hand, as a certifiable East Coaster (he was born and bred in Rhode Island in the early fifties, where he continues to work today), some might hail Heeks as a current torchbearer of what was the mid-twentieth century glory of New York abstract painting. (Insert here citations of 'expressive brushwork' and 'drips'.) On the other hand, current viewers might just as easily grumble about these same qualities, feeling that those same issues have now long since lost their urgency. However, it is safe to say that through his own aesthetic phrasing Heeks creates a rather compelling visual sweep, one that retains its relevancy today even as it flirts with yesterday's modes.

—DREW SNYD

SAN FRANCISCO
"Sweet Tooth"
at Scott Richards Contemporary Art

In the second act of Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker," as choreographed by Marius Petipa, a dazed Clara, escorted by her princely Nutcracker, arrives in the Land of the Sweets. This serves as the premise for an assortment of virtuoso dances by anthropomorphized sweets—such as proud Spanish chocolates, gymnastic Russian candy-canes and a sinuous Arabian coffee duo—always a high point for viewers over the age of 18. Scott Richards Contemporary Art in San Francisco recently took viewers down a similar candy-coated path into a surreal realm with "Sweet Tooth," a group show of colorful, opulent works depicting candy,

