

Bright and beautiful

This American painter produces abstract work with a feeling of landscape, writes Sarah Urwin Jones

Artist profile

Alexis Marguerite Teplin: 5cm Higher
Mary Mary Gallery
Suite 2/1, 6 Dixon Street, Glasgow
0141 226 2257
www.marymarygallery.co.uk
Until March 27

Known for thickly daubed works full of bright, brash colours, American artist Alexis Marguerite Teplin skirts art history, modernism and pop culture by way of a concern – explored in her latest solo show at Mary Mary Gallery in Glasgow – with the “politics and aesthetics of the feminine”.

Consistently working the same thematic seams, with everything from the colours to the brushstrokes reimagined from past art historical movements, the figurative – and more often the absence of the figure – looms large in her work, as seen right in *Boy as Pierrot*.

Teplin, only a decade into her career after leaving art school, builds up installations from multiple mixed works, using

painting and sculpture to address her theme. Born in 1976, she trained at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and the Università di Belli Arti, Bologna (BA 1998) before going on to the Art Centre College of Design in Pasadena (LA) to do an MFA. She was Starr Fellow at the Royal Academy of Art, London, in 2003. Recent shows for the now London-based artist include *Can you hear the Sea?* (Blanket Gallery, Vancouver 2009), *Viaggio in Italia*, *For Giulietta*, *Car Projects*, Bologna (2008), *Yes Parisol*, *My Marisol* (Hotel, London 2008) and



Jenny Lind at the then new *Concrete* (2008) space in London's Hayward Gallery.

In 2009 Teplin developed the literary interests in her visual work and wrote a play, *The Party*, which was performed as part of *Serpentine Nights*, the summer season of arts events at London's *Serpentine*

Gallery. The four-person show exploring her interest in the artists as muse could, she said, be seen to function as a performative index to her practice. It will be restaged later this year as part of the Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art.

Teplin's well-received work might appear abstract, yet there is a real feeling of landscape, whether it is in the physical form of a loose canvas strung up on a line – as at her new *Mary Mary* show – or the movement and vigour of the application of the paint itself. Teplin is generous with the surfaces she paints, from canvas to plaster of Paris. Her liberal application of oils has daubed found items as reinvented still lifes, objectifying them, using, as *Mary Mary* Gallery Director Hannah Robinson puts it, “paint to bestow historical status on the commonplace”.

This is not Teplin's first exhibition at *Mary Mary*; last year she contributed to group show *Arrival Inside*. However, this exhibition is all new work, created specially for this exhibition, from vividly pungent canvases to painting-over of prints by Anthon Beeke (*Naked Ladies Alphabet*, 1971), an expressive technique that Teplin has repeatedly employed.

The title itself, *5cm Higher*, refers to Joseph Beuys's recommendations for the proportion and aesthetics of the Berlin Wall. Like Teplin's previous work, it promises to wear its multiple lofty references in a surprisingly light and aesthetic manner.