

## Andrea Belag

Mike Weiss

Abstract painter Andrea Belag, in her first show with Mike Weiss, has shifted gears. While still using her signature palette of primaries with a past—seductive crimsons, late-hour blues, and yellows that have nothing to do with nature, paired at times with sultry oranges, absinthe green, and other slinky, premonitory shades—she has also lightened up in these dozen new canvases. Belag, who is a natural colorist, has refreshed her palette with more insouciant, innocent hues—pinks, blonds, blues, violets.

She has also left great swaths of her new paintings translucent, their softly luminous surfaces swirled, their brushwork strikingly visible. She uses oil paint in a way that suggests watercolor. For some time, the two main sources of her work have been film noir, with its allusive chiaroscuro (she favors melodramatic and painterly titles like *Shadow of Doubt*, *Slightly Scarlet*, and *Purple Noon*), and the architectonic grid that suggests windows, doors, and frames—a nod, perhaps, to Howard Hodgkin.

In these paintings (all 2006 and 2007), Belag has more or less dismantled her grids, opening her semblance of doors and windows to let in less fraught light and more space. She has added a curtain-like curve to establish a kind of theater. For Belag, using the device of a frame to separate the fictive from the real is still critical.



Andrea Belag, *Awash*, 2007, oil on canvas, 84" x 57".

Mike Weiss.

While some of the paintings retained architectural elements—like *Detour*'s central slanted ladder and *Purple Noon*'s slats, which recall window blinds—many were more baroque, such as *Shadow of Doubt*, with its less planar space and brushy, sensual pink.

Belag is taking risks, pushing her paintings into undefined, ephemeral territory. But the rewards are many as she lets color and brushwork, for now, take precedence.

—Lilly Wei