

# ARTFORUM

Auckland

## James Cousins and Simon Ingram

GOW LANGSFORD GALLERY

26 Lorne Street, PO Box 546

January 9–January 23



View of "James Cousins and Simon Ingram," 2009. From left: James Cousins, *Drought*, 2010; Simon Ingram, *Riser*, 2009; James Cousins, *Y.F. 4*, 2009; Simon Ingram, *Untitled*, 2009.

Gow Langsford is touting its new "Initiative" exhibition series as a forum for the gallery's artists to show what is, in the context of chiefly formalist practices, more or less experimental work. "TAG," the project's inaugural entry, offers abstract paintings by James Cousins and Simon Ingram. Ranged around the space in ones and twos, the diminutive panels perform a variety of material and compositional stunts, the paired artists' contributions interacting neatly with each other to the degree that they nearly appear as products of a single hand. All the pictures make use of intense color, Cousins adding the counterpoint of all-over textural effects, while Ingram relies on simple, linear brushwork.

Known for using "artificial life systems" as a governing creative principle and for constructing picture-making robots, Ingram customarily produces large-scale canvases and uses video to document the semiautomatic processes by which they come into being. Of his works on display here, two feature the staccato dabs of pigment characteristic of the artist's machine-made works, while a third weaves a maplike composition around a tight grid. Cousins has also made previous use of partially or apparently mechanistic and schematic techniques, using complex masking to make and unmake painted surfaces. But while much of his recent work has employed stylized landscape imagery, the works here are largely cast adrift from identifiable figuration. The strain of experimentation that "TAG" presents is, then, only subtly divergent from its participants' norms, but the dialogue it acknowledges is a rewarding one.

— Michael Wilson

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