

ARTNEWS

Maine, Stephen. "Trudy Benson." *Artnews*. Summer 2015, p. 94.

TRUDY BENSON

LISA COOLEY
APRIL 4 - MAY 3

With this show, "Shapes of Things," Trudy Benson sidestepped a hazard of premature success: shtick. In nine paintings (all but one dated 2015), she moved beyond the jokey use of tropes culled from computer-graphics programs and turned to drawing, in various guises, opening the work up to fresh visual ideas and material procedures.

In *From Cut Out* she gives herself a bit of elbow room, admitting copious areas of unpainted canvas. A truncated hot-orange disk and two coral-pink bands establish the tropical chromatic flavor of *New Shapes*, which also typifies Benson's approach to setting up recessive, planar space through such varied mark-making as noodly, soft-focus air-brushing and globby low relief.



Trudy Benson, *Thoth*, 2015, acrylic, enamel, and oil on canvas, 66" x 61".

In the tradition of postwar New York abstraction, these ambitious, deceptively casual looking works justify their generally large size. (The delightful *Banana Phone* is an exception; its punchy black, white, yellow, and red program gets the job done at just 36 inches square.) In several works, including *Blue Windows* and *Tan Gram*, roughly rectilinear figures drift across variegated atmospheric grounds, inevitably recalling Hans Hofmann, while Jonathan Lasker's procedural deliberation and Al Held's bustling expansion also come to mind. Yes, that's a lot to pile on these funny, buoyant paintings—but they can handle it.

STEPHEN MAINE