

Time Out

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Fred Pollock

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Fred Pollock works in the tradition of British abstraction associated with the 1950s. He has many fans; I am not one of them. My dislike has nothing to do with the prejudice that Abstract Expressionism has long passed its sell-by-date, but rather that Pollock's latest series too closely follows his own tried-and-tested formulae.

His paintings are certainly not incompetent. Slabs of acrylic are painstakingly built up to create densely encrusted surfaces, while his colour juxtapositions (saturated primaries set against delicate pastels) are skilfully choreographed to spin before the eyes like Whirling Dervishes. According to the catalogue, Pollock has a reproduction of Matisse's 'Snail' (1953) on the wall of his studio, and his spiral compositions reverentially echo this earlier masterpiece. However, if they share a delight in clashing their colours like cymbals, Matisse transformed chaos into vibrant harmonies, whereas Pollock frequently strays into a cacophonous danger zone. My main criticism lies in the unrelenting monotony of Pollock's emotional range. He is good at representing 'joy', but imagine spending one's entire life on Ecstasy. Perpetual bliss is boring. *Tania Guha*

