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New Painting from Teo González at Brian Gross

By Kenneth Baker

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The recent works of **Teo González** at Brian Gross mark a logical next step for a painter who 15 years ago began each picture by ruling on it a strict, tight grid, whose cells he then filled with tiny dollops of color. The color blobs, varying slightly in size, shape and density, created unplannable pulsations throughout each picture's surface. González later extended the same practice to filling freehand grids, producing more dramatic optical warps of the picture plane.

The recent paintings appear to abandon the grid altogether in favor of a gradual accumulation of little circular cells that González fills at whim with dots of color or leaves empty. The resulting effects, I imagine, will interest viewers who have followed González's work far more than those who have not.



"Untitled #593" (2010) acrylic on canvas over panel by Teo Gonzalez 78" x 78" Photo: Courtesy, Brian Gross Fine Art, S.F.

A painting such as "Untitled #593" (2010) challenged him to keep the accreting dotted lines from forming figures and their overall pattern from appearing to continue beyond the canvas' limits. These tasks are more difficult than they sound, yet they may engage only viewers aware of the controversies in abstract painting's past.

Seemingly unsought and irrelevant affinities to Australian Aboriginal art haunt several of González's recent paintings, which appear to want to reject associative content. Only the large black-on-black canvas really succeeds in this respect.

I see González as having painted himself into a corner defined partly by his own artistic history. Watch for a leap outward in some direction to come next.