



Monica Tap

WYNICK/TUCK GALLERY, TORONTO

The desire to make paintings that reflect the ephemeral character of moving pictures is a time-honoured aspiration. Although the invention of photography is often identified as the impetus behind modernist painting, Arthur C. Danto has, perhaps more accurately, acknowledged the role played by the invention of cinema. Nineteenth-century photography was, after all, never really able to capture life's splendour on the grand scale available to the truly gifted painter. The invention of moving pictures, however, changed things dramatically. Since the early 20th century, painters have called on an abundance of styles, movements and ideologies in order to wrestle with the daunting task of imparting to the static painted image a modern sense of mobility. In her recent work, Monica Tap dusts off this venerable challenge and gives it a contemporary and novel spin: can the language of video, in this case low-resolution digital video, be translated into the language of painting? Tap presents several intriguing and handsome answers.

One-second Hudson is a series of paintings based on one-second video clips shot on a digital camera

while the artist rode the train through New York State. These modestly scaled canvases are spaced evenly on the gallery walls, clearly evoking a succession of film stills. The paintings are blurry in a way that implies forward motion. Unlike the celebrated German blurmeister Gerhard Richter, however, Tap builds this sense of motion into the preliminary drawn structure of each painting. Rather than blurring her paintings, Tap represents blurring.

As compelling as the *One-second Hudson* cycle is, the best works on display here are two large paintings: *Grand River I* and *One-second Hudson no. 1-15*. In these paintings, the bigger brushes come out to play around with their smaller relatives. The sheer range of Tap's mark-making is impressive, and overwhelming. In all of Tap's works, brush stroke is line and line is colour. Her brushwork is a multitudinous patchwork of *drawn* colours contained, to varying degrees, within representational structures. In the larger works, Tap gives her rich assortment of hues and opacities more latitude, and the image collapses into abstraction from the exuberance of her brushwork's refined choreography. Taken as a whole, the exhibition presents a myriad of intelligent and sophisticated responses to one of painting's most enduring and complex challenges.

PETE SMITH

MONICA TAP *One-second Hudson no. 15* 2007 Oil on linen 61 x 81.2 cm