

M A R G A R E T
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P R O J E C T S

ARTFORUM

Teo González

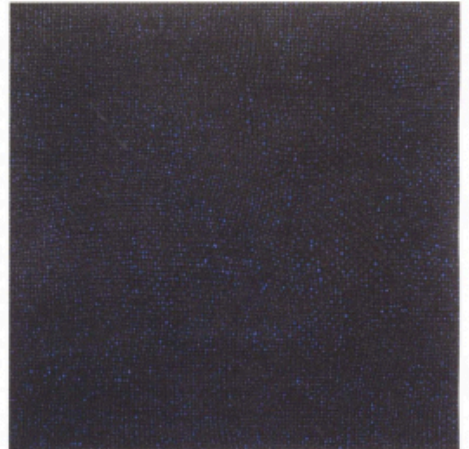
By Nord Wennerstrom
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In his recent exhibition, "226,085 Drops," Spanish-born, Brooklyn-based artist Teo González proved himself capable of coaxing transcendent moments from mere dabs of paint. González's square grids are composed of tight clusters of thousands of miniscule "drops-within-drops." His process involves the application of dabs of acrylic polymer emulsion to a gessoed surface. The composition of the emulsion forces the color to disperse to the edges of each drop, forming tiny haloes. A second set of drops, this time of acrylic enamel, is then spotted onto the first. González references Minimalism and process art—the work of Sol LeWitt, Eva Hesse, and Agnes Martin in particular—in exploring the aqueous properties of his pigments and in the improvisational nature of his technique.

Until recently, González's best efforts have been black-and-white works on paper that resemble photographic negatives of a starry sky. Deceptively simple, they reveal rich contrasts of light and dark, dewy and dry. Unfortunately, works on canvas from this period are less successful, displaying an imbalanced orchestration of color and contrast. "226, 085 Drops" (the title refers to the total numbers of drops in all twelve of the works on show), marked an important step forward. González succeeded here on several fronts by making more authoritative use of color, adroitly realizing his vision on various scales, and tinkering provocatively with his established method. The once straightforward grid is now more like netting in a breeze, bunched in some places and undulating in others. The most successful paintings feature all-over compositions pushed to the very edge of the supports as if about to burst beyond them. (Conversely, when the grid is suspended in the center of the canvas with a wide border of flat color around it, the energy dissipates.)

González's use of color was particularly successful in this show, and paralleled a more mature and nuanced inquiry into density and luminosity. The Prussian-blue ground of *Untitled #400 (12,544 clear blue on Prussian blue direct 112 gauge)*, 2006, has the rich, fathomless quality one associates with the blues of Yves Klein and Anish Kapoor, and permits the contrasting lighter-colored dots to shimmy and quiver on the surface. Similarly, *Untitled #401 (16,641 red on yellow direct 129 gauge)*, 2006, offers up the potentially gaudy combination of bright red dots on a lemon

yellow background, but the use of red is sufficiently restrained, which defuses the impact of the yellow and transforms the effect from jarring to meditative. The less saturated ground of the six-foot-square *Untitled #405 (21,025 gold on copper blue direct 145 gauge)*, 2006, with a blue-green color of oxidized copper, seems weathered and dry by comparison. Dappled in gold, it suggests celadon porcelain and the dreamy landscapes of Thomas Wilmer Dewing. González, like Robert Ryman, balances fastidiousness with controlled chaos. He finds strength in restriction and uses contrasted subtleties as passages to revelation.



Teo González, *Untitled #400 (12,544 clear blue on Prussian blue direct 112 gauge)*, 2006, acrylic polymer emulsion, pigment, and acrylic enamel on cotton mounted on board, 48 x 48".