

Kristine Moran @ Sis Boom Bah (Toronto)

If one of Cecily Brown's paintings were involved in a car crash, the kind of car crash that spun it into a Julie Mehretu-like cycle of energy, it would come to rest as a Kristine Moran painting.



This is both compliment and encouragement. Moran is young, just about to be out of art school (the Ontario College of Art and Design) and she's working her way through her favorite painters, learning how to synthesize their visuals and their technique in a way that emerges as a Kristine Moran painting. She's not there yet, but a series of paintings at

Toronto's Sis Boom Bah Gallery show ([full set of images here](#)) that Moran knows what she wants a Moran painting to be and that she is on her way.

Moran's paintings are about speed: both going fast and what happens when fast-moving objects suddenly stop moving. Moran represents speed by building planar, architectural landscapes and then using fast, straight lines (Mehretu!) or flat but thick application of paint to create the feel of fast. Crashes are represented by orgies of built-up, splattered, squeezed, shmooshed paint (Cecily!). These oil-and-enamel-on-panel paintings make you smile: they're easy to read and they're fun to re-read.

Cecily and Mehretu aren't the only influences here. Moran's paintings read a little bit like what would happen if the Roadrunner and Wile E. Coyote had cars and were driving through Tron. In that way they remind me of so much recent drawing, where artists place their characters or narrative on white paper, completely devoid of context or background. (Ubiquitous and overrated Canadian Marcel Dzama's work is the best example of this.) With the exception of those Tron-like 3-D architectural spaces, Moran paints her speed scenes on bright backgrounds of a single color.

I wonder if Tron, the early 80's videogame, is a subconscious influence on many artists in their upper 20's and early 30's. In Tron, the focus of the game was on the action created by the player -- early video game computing was primitive and slow and providing active backgrounds would have consumed too much computing power. (Same with Asteroids, for example. The Whitney Biennial [installation by Cory Arcangel](#) is a more simplistic and less engaging example of video game influences.)

Much of the energy in Moran's paintings comes from the entertaining way in which she's mixed Cecily's brushstrokes with the flatness of cartoons and videogames. I'm looking forward to watching her grow as a painter.

Kristine Moran's show, blast radius, was at Toronto's Sis Boom Bah Gallery from February 20 to March 6, 2004. Her show at [Angell Gallery](#) opens on May 20, 2004.

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