

## Bernard Frize

BERLINISCHE GALERIE  
Alte Jakobstrasse 124-128  
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Bernard Frize, *Brent*, 1992, acrylic and resin on canvas, 70 x 70".

Bernard Frize's latest exhibition is a teaser. The twelve paintings on view provide only a glimpse of the body of work that Frize has produced since the mid-1970s and for which he was recently awarded the Fred Thieler Prize for Painting in Berlin. The Frize we find here is a colorist with a new method for every painting. But appearances are deceiving: The show excludes many intermediate variations on the same themes. This makes for an impressive survey of the breadth, but not the depth, of Frize's oeuvre.

"The brush paints," Frize has said, and this near tautology speaks volumes about his approach, not only reflecting the detachment to which the artist aspires as a creator (in which all self-expression is ruled out) but also describing what we actually see. His paintings here consist of tracks left by one or more brushes: nothing else. The artist's method and handling of paint constitute the visual content and are dramatized in color. Frize undogmatically investigates the permutations of brush, paint, and action.

For *Brent*, 1992, he covered a broad brush with paint in various colors and used it to make parallel trails of pigment on the canvas. Assistants helped with *Isotopie No. 1* (Isotopy No. 1), 2005, with multiple hands moving across the canvas at once. It is surprising how varied the moods of the different paintings are, given Frize's consistently calculating approach. He achieves this diversity by leaving room for chance—for dripping paint, brush marks, and other surprises. He is not the kind of painter who goes back and makes adjustments. His work derives its unique qualities from the tension between the pre-established procedure and the unpredictable performance, between the transparent concept and the enigmatic result.

*Translated from Dutch by David McKay.*

— Jurriaan Benschop