

TIBOR DE NAGY

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Medrie MacPhee

In 2012, when this Canadian-born painter started a conceptual fashion line called RELAX—featuring bespoke garments stitched together from sweatsuits and similarly comfortable, affordable castoffs—she also discovered an innovative, collagelike structure for her abstract canvases. (MacPhee, who moved to New York in 1976, had previously been depicting surreally empty architectural spaces.) In the four new paintings in her current show, at the Tibor de Nagy gallery, blocky flatness and rugged surfaces rule. The big compositions’ irregular shapes are plotted out by the seams of deconstructed garments, like parcels of land on a map. In “Take Me to the River,” a commanding work in bright navy blue, an overlay of white lines suggests fragmented circuitry; “Favela” is a handsome crowd of mustard, crimson, burgundy, and blue trapezoids. Although MacPhee sometimes plays with the gender associations of the fabrics she chooses, such concerns feel secondary to her invigorating and magnetic formalism.

— *Johanna Fateman*