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Fran Shalom: Everyday Improvisations at Kathryn Markel

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Fran Shalom's paintings reduce form to its essentials while preserving the marks of revision and doubt. The surface becomes a record of both decision and hesitation, clarity and its undoing. Her compositions are direct yet ambivalent. Airy lines float within vivid color fields, their edges both firm and uncertain, altogether suggesting a state of being through color, motion, and gesture rather than representation. They obstinately remain abstract, teasing recognition without granting it.

In Toothy, a large irregular rectangle rises from a narrow stem that anchors it to the bottom edge of the canvas. Its rounded corners and tapering sides give it a bodily presence, part vessel and part popsicle. The delicious surface is layered with a dense, "dirty" pink brushed over a muted blue ground, the sweep of the hand visible in every pass. The paint feels slow and deliberate. Against the pale field, the pink form at the foreground hovers between object and void —

witty-Pop in its directness yet somewhat inward in mood, an entity that both declares itself and withholds meaning.



Fran Shalom, Toothy, 2025, oil on canvas, 16 x 16 in.

Forgetting the Self, centers on a dense red form enclosing a yellow interior bounded by fine blue lines. The structure feels architectural yet pliant, its geometry held in suspension. The red shape has a bodily weight, while the yellow interior, bright and frontal, functions simultaneously as surface and aperture. Space folds inward: a shape within a shape, a body containing its own absence. The linear sensibility counterbalances the red form's bulk, creating a dialogue between containment and release. The color interaction is sharp and strange, the yellow



Fran Shalom, Forgetting the Self, 2025, oil on canvas, 24 x 24 in.

glowing against the red, the pink-purplish line tracing its edge like a pulse of energy.

The smaller scale On The Move reiterates the bright pinkish red and yellow hues, but here, the red slips to the back while the yellow frames a mysterious uneven squarish shape with gutsy insides — a rich bloody red suspended in a web of black fog. The image opens into a surprising pictorial depth, its layered reds recalling a baroque sensibility in sharp contrast to the flat Pop-ish yellow frame.



Fran Shalom, On The Move, 2025, oil on wood, 16 x 16 in.

Shalom's brushwork has rhythmic precision. The paint is quite thinly layered but carries sensual weight, musical in its timing. Her color is bright but never ornamental. It conveys immediacy, humor, and intelligence, offering pleasure grounded in restraint. Shalom's work feels serious in its playfulness.