

Melbourne

counter-current

Jennifer Goodman

Gallerysmith

13 November to 13 December

Opening hours:

Tues to Sat 11am–5pm

Jennifer Goodman works from a light, white studio where everything seems as carefully ordered as her abstract paintings. Having spent more than a decade on geometric abstractions, a couple of years ago Goodman released herself from the “restrictions of the grid” and proceeded to find an “explosive sense of freedom”.

But don't for a moment imagine that means just throwing paint around. Everything in Goodman's paintings – the composition, colour, tone – is supremely finessed. Her overlapping, intersecting, often rounded shapes evolve from paper-collage studies with nothing left to chance. The more than 350 plastic-wrap-covered bowls of oil paint lined up on trolleys in her studio and the books full of annotated paint swatches ensure she could perfectly reproduce any colour she has ever used.

“The minimum number of layers in the paintings would be three, but if the colour or tone isn't right I can have 10 layers. There's a lot of adjustment,” she says. “I have such a finely tuned idea in my head of how it should be. The colours and tones have to sit correctly – some layers sit forward and others sit back.”

Each painting takes a minimum of a month but they can take a lot longer than that. And the trick



Jennifer Goodman, *Flow 2*, 2014, oil on linen, 180 x 130 cm.
Courtesy of the artist and Gallerysmith, Melbourne.

is for Goodman to make them appear as if they are not particularly laboured at all. Goodman wants her pictures to exude a softness and warmth despite the careful planning and notable absence of brushstrokes.

Having shown with John Buckley Gallery since 2002, her first solo show at Gallerysmith includes paintings of collages as well as paintings composed from the scraps of paper left after the collages were cut. Both starting points lead to organic-feeling pictures that rely on careful concocting. **Megan Backhouse**