

Frank, Peter. "go: David Smith." *LA Weekly*, 12-18 August 2005, p. 50.

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## DAVID SMITH

The image we have of David Smith's work — large, machinelike geometric elements packing an expansive abstract expressionist wallop — doesn't tell the whole story. There were the early, figuratively leaning cast and welded pieces, there were many later objects of a quirky, postsurrealist nature, and, most surprising of all, there were paintings galore. Seen here (alone evidently for the first time), the paintings of 1955–58 comprise a distinct and compelling oeuvre. The nervous, darting lines from which Smith built his oils come right out of drawing, so in that sense — and in the sensation they provide of constructed and compiled shapes — the canvases remain the work of someone thinking sculpturally. Indeed, the brush stroke, however thick, is not painterly as such, but seems drawn, and the strokes all feel fused — welded, if you will — one to another. But the quality of the paint itself, its color, its shifting density and its overall materiality, reveals that Smith — who began his career as a painter — maintained a respect for the medium's material integrity. Just like his full-time painter pals, what he did with paint was what paint wanted to do. At Margo Leavin, 812 N. Robertson Blvd., W. Hywd., Tues.-Sat., 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; thru Aug. 20. (310) 273-0603.



*David Smith, Untitled (1958)*

—Peter Frank