

# WALL STREET JOURNAL

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- [NY CULTURE](#)
- July 6, 2012, 6:00 p.m. ET

## From an Abstract Giant to None



Gary Petersen/Theodore:Art

Gary Petersen's 'Untitled S5' (2012), part of the group show, 'There Are No Giants Upstairs,' at Theodore:Art.

### *There Are No Giants Upstairs*

#### **Theodore:Art**

156 Bogart St., Brooklyn  
(212) 966-4324  
Through July 29

Group shows are a dime a dozen come summer, but the best ones are more than rummage sales. They can expand our vocabulary of artists and draw connections between works, taking chances when the pressure to sell is off.

At Theodore:Art, a gallery that has recently moved from SoHo to a subterranean space in Brooklyn, the group show is called "There Are No Giants Upstairs." According to gallery owner Stephanie Theodore, the title comes from something a young patron once said, self-reassuringly, after hearing footsteps overhead. But it could just as well refer to the artists' desire to paint in

their own ungoverned way.

This exhibition of work by Chris Baker, Mel Bernstine, Steven Charles, Harriet Korman, Gary Petersen and Andrew Seto is a tight little survey of contemporary abstraction, with work ranging from brushy (Mr. Seto) to hard-edged (Mr. Petersen), restrained (Ms. Korman) to anything goes (Mr. Charles). But whether it's Mr. Baker's rubbed-down surfaces or Mr. Bernstine's eye-popping bursts of color and line—the stars of the show—what these artists share is a deeply felt relationship to paint and an appreciation of the magic it can conjure.