

ARTFORUM

LOS ANGELES

Daniel Dove and Tom McGrath

CHERRY AND MARTIN

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Daniel Dove and Tom McGrath share an obsession: staging an intense conflict between the sidewinder sprawl of their epic landscapes and the local brush fire of surface incident. This tension between alienated vistas and the pocks, grooves, and sickly-sexy smears gives their work a powerful sense of vertigo. In McGrath's *TBT (Dusk Grid)* (all works 2007), a pointillistic rainfall of dark pink smog—a disturbingly two-dimensional form of cloud cover—mars a coach passenger's view of what looks like the nighttime outline of LAX. In *TBT (Headlights)*, a tree surrenders its twilight mysteries to a series of black smudges and accretions; it's a sensuous yet somehow anxious reminder of flatness. Dove and McGrath have been pegged as maximalists, but the overwhelming emotion here is claustrophobia: Everything that expands and unfurls is reduced, in the end, to a skinscape. Possibly the strangest manifestation of the duo's no-fire zone between figure and abstraction is Dove's *Reconstruction of Renovation*, a rendering of a surly, snakelike, seemingly purposeless public-works project in the middle of some imaginary heartland. Here, Dove's massive coils and tangles, held in by scaffolding like the reptiles at your local zoo, writhe in sinuous, intimidating shapes until they vanish into the nullity of pure paint.

— Matthew Wilder