

## GAGOSIAN GALLERY

### ARTSCENE™



Cecily Brown, "Be Nice to the Big Blue Sea," 2012, oil on linen, 109 x 171", is currently on view at Gagosian.

**Cecily Brown's** exhibition of recent paintings pays homage to the historical tradition of nude ensemble painting. Every inch of these mostly large scale works are packed with fragmented figures, faces and body parts. These often-anonymous anatomical forms are vigorously painted and are often dominated by orange and fleshy color combinations. Brown's mark-making and gestural execution of the often hide-and-seek images are immediately reminiscent of DeKooning's classic abstract expressionism. There is beauty and liveliness in Brown's brushstrokes and a confident energy in the way she lays down color. She appears to move easily from one monumental painting to the next, seemingly never skipping a beat. Yet the content belies her painterly technique. The visual effort required to decipher the subject matter and detail is exhausting and uncomfortable. Though the canvases are formally strong, we have to wonder what the artist is trying to communicate. Is she commenting on the sometimes confusing and overwhelming multi-dimensional complexities and realities of 21st century life? Brown wants us to walk away with questions – so we will come back for more. Her four relatively small works in the rear gallery give us a glimpse of a more personal and intimate connection with the viewer that come as something of a relief (Gagosian Gallery, Beverly Hills).

Cathy Breslaw