

Top right: Christopher Tanner. His creations, from above: *Untitled (Black & Blue)*, 2001 (mixed media on paper, 60"x40"); detail of *Darling Forever*, 1990 (mixed media on wood, 6'x6'). See Resources.



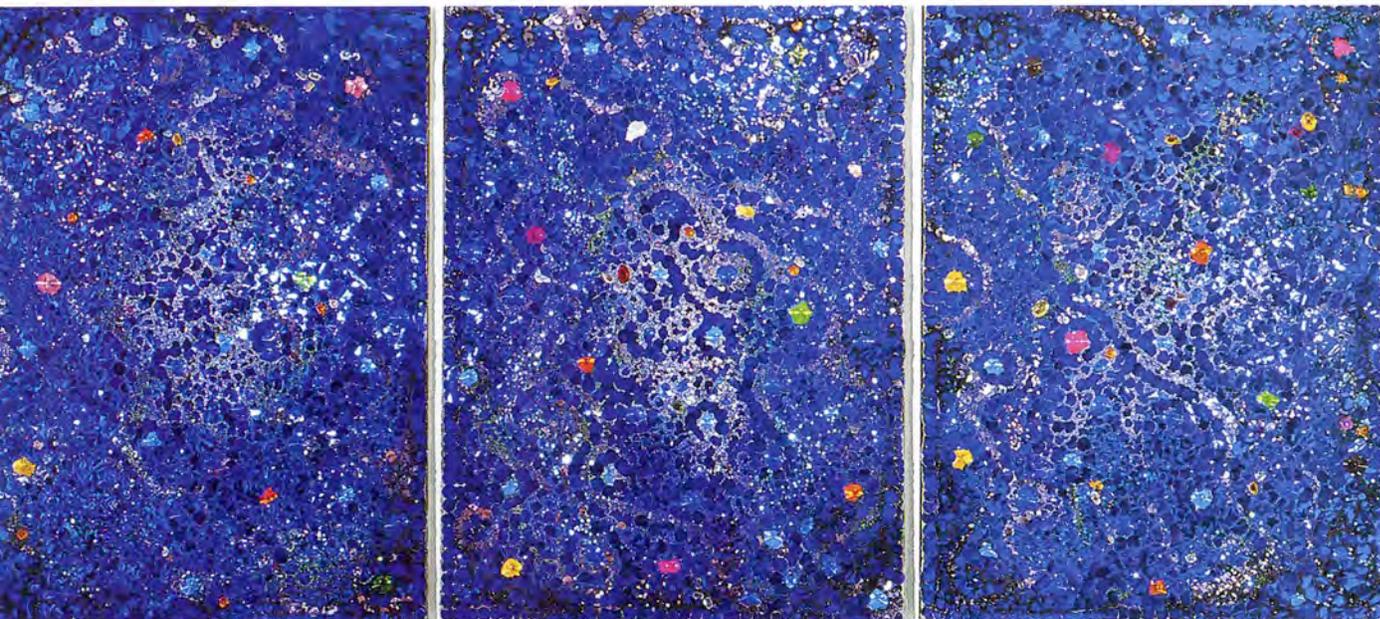
Christopher Tanner

A Manhattan artist mines Taiwan's alleys and Oz's yellow-brick road to create works that sparkle and glimmer

Perhaps the only thing that qualifies as subdued in Christopher Tanner's East Village apartment is his 13-year-old black Pekingese. But then again, the dog's name—Giggles—makes up for any lack of spunk. Covering nearly every inch of wall are canvases dripping in sequins, mottled with colored sand, encrusted with jewels, and doused in glitter. Frames shimmer with gold and silver leaf, and so do—though in less freewheeling designs—closet doors and odd pieces of bric-a-brac, from a wood pedestal holding an antique Thai drum to a ceramic Egyptian bust mounted high on a wall like a moose head.

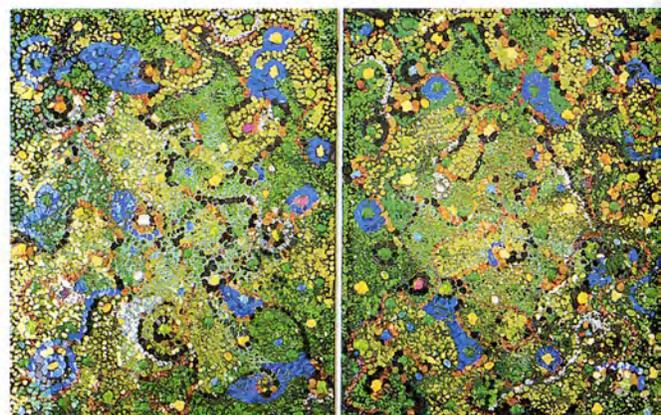
"I love anything that's a little too much," says Tanner, seated in the middle of it all wearing jeans and a bright-yellow shirt. It is here, in front of an old tin table, that he often wields spoons and chopsticks, not just to eat, but to spread, plot, and glue his dazzling abstract arrays.

Although he borrows liberally from the language of camp and kitsch, Tanner also a performance artist, ultimately offers sophistication. "His works transcend popular reference," says New York dealer >



From top: *Untitled (Blue Triptych)*, 2000 (48"x110"); *After the Rain*, 2000 (60"x96"); *Untitled (Pink)*, 2000 (36"x36"), all mixed media on canvas.

The juxtaposition of a
drunken Judy Garland
 with the magic of Dorothy fascinated Tanner—
 the sparkle and the darkness



Pavel Zoubok, who is exhibiting about a dozen of the artist's latest pieces at his Madison Avenue gallery through October 12. "There's no definitive way to read them. Every time you take a step, they change—the light, the color, the patterns. They're in a constant state of motion."

The reflections and refractions of the paillettes, along with a bold, loopy line that often winds in and out of the paintings, is his way "of looking around and through to the other side," explains Tanner, playfully weaving his neck back and forth like a hip-hop dancer. It is also a way of looking back. While the paintings are decidedly giddy with glamour, they're "not all cherries and roses," he insists. "They're my life experience. I'm not trying to mask it, but costume it, dress it up, celebrate it."

The artist, who grew up near Pasadena, California, studied neon sculpture at the Academy of Art College in San Francisco, but it was his theatrical pursuits that brought him to New York, where he has delivered singing telegrams, sung in an opera directed by David Lynch, and collaborated with performance artist Karen Finley. ▷