

Painting holds a particular place in history. It is the medium of record and change for art, world events and the human spirit. With this in mind, Nisus gallery is proud to present our second annual painting show. "Flatlands," is about duality and the complexity of perception. Painting is both an analytical and emotional pursuit. It both a 2D and 3D experience. Painting is both fragile and heroic. It is always representational and abstracted. With the internet at our finger tips, painting both competes with and utilizes the recent proliferation of digital visual culture. In the life of a painting the past and future are always present; the past evidenced in the works' making and in the layers collected by the artists, while the future is defined by an audience. There is a melancholy about this past and a cheerful anxiety about the future. "Flatlands," focuses on paintings that reveal evidence of their own making, embrace duality in it's many forms, and, ultimately, celebrate painting.

Emily Counts' work depicts people as they might appear in an alternate universe. Using brightly colored shapes, she manipulates what we know to express her own narrative. In other words, she takes something representational and abstracts it. About her work Emily writes:

This series of paintings explores the physical and metaphysical characteristics that define us as human, with focus on the structure and forms that we intuitively recognize as a human face and head. I am experimenting with abstracting, obscuring, or interrupting the facial symmetry with overlaid geometric shapes and patterns, while questioning whether the depiction either no longer reads as human, or why we still recognize the intended subject despite the abstraction. Robot and android technology and artificial intelligence have influenced these works as I think about the border between human and machine, as well as the border between life and death.

In contrast, **Tia Factor** takes an abstract idea and creates a representation of it in gouache, acrylic ink and spray paint. About her work, Factor writes:

This piece is the result of an interview I did with a friend. She described being in an ancient walled city in Italy, way up on the top of a rugged mountain. She was fighting with her husband on that trip and feeling very low until she found herself wandering into an old walled garden next to a monastery. The garden was overgrown and in disrepair. As she sat in the walled garden in this ancient walled city, she had a moment of transformation and clarity, helping repair her mental state, and her relationship. This painting is one in a larger series of works entitled, In Want of the World. In Want of the World is a project motivated by a longing for travel and romanticizing of places already visited. I explore the common need to transform nuanced and complex places into simplified places of fantasy. Through interviews with people who have traveled, most often far from home, I gather descriptions of various locations that maintain an important role in the interviewee's mind, even years after the initial experience. Using these interviews as a jumping-off place, I sublimate the sense of escape and fulfillment that is so often promised by travel while questioning the truth behind that promise and the images generated by that fantasy.

Ruth Lantz's work, while also testing the boundaries of painterly abstraction, uses photography and chance chance to challenges our understanding of perception. About her work, Lantz writes:

I create paintings that distill the ambiguity of visual appearances. Commingling abstraction and representation I approach my work through a series of filtration systems: perceptual, process driven, and painterly. I compile these tensional forces to examine the continual translation, overlap, and fracture implicated by sight. This method produces a build-up of complexity and a breaking apart of information that aims to capture the moments between identification and uncertainty.

I produce slippages between the photographic affect and the painterly sensation through manipulating images with bleach and acrylic media. The paintings intertwine chance applications, photographic reproductions, and intentional gestures to create inscrutable surfaces that challenge the viewer to question what they are seeing.

Grant Hottle's pieces pay homage to abstract painters before him while furthering the field in a playful way. About his work, Grant says:

My current paintings use the language of abstraction to take aim at the mythologies of the end of times. They depict accidental apocalypses that, like good metal bands or horror movies, are as serious as possible without being real.

Daniela Molnar's work illustrates the fluid movement, as well as the precise structure of flowers. These works are both color field paintings and botanical studies. About her work, Molnar writes:

The Mimicry, dispersal series explores how patterns in nature are perceived, named and understood. The work questions habits of naming and perception -- when is a flower no longer a flower? When does it cease to be a noun and become a verb? The series is also based on an inquiry into my own and cultural attitudes concerning beauty and utility.

Similarly, the painting by **Jack Featherly** functions as both an organic portrait and precise typeface.

These stand in relation to **Michael Endo's** work that provides a broader narrative exposition.

The duality of flat, geometric shapes and thick, painterly imposto is ever present in work by **Calvin Ross Carl**. The rhythm evoked by the bright patterns are complicated by the frosting-like tempo of the paint. Speaking to this, Ross Carl says:

My paintings and objects contrast the literal, inhuman characteristics of geometry with the informal, humble images and materials of the American home and work environment. The purpose is to combine the value associated with modern, hard-edge design with the more mundane elements appropriated from the home. Handmade imperfections are embraced, bringing levity and familiarity to the ambiguous geometric forms. This playful use of opticality and grids mixed with loose surfaces and edges reminds the viewer of the hand required to fulfill the task of creating the object.

Roy Tomlinson's paintings are both analytical and emotional in their approach. About his work, Roy writes:

Working. Layering. Reworking. The forms in the paintings are flat, although my attention is on the ambiguity of space. The images seem simple and tangible, yet the pieces have more to do with that which I am unable to touch. Reconsidering the nature of familiar things. Working to embrace the idea that objects are always changing, that they exist without a solid structure, a defined edge, or even a fixed location in time. This requires a shift in the relationship I have to the world of things. Working. Failing. Reimagining. I find myself playing with the tension that occurs when opposing elements come together. When the stability of a pictorial condition is compromised. When interpretations are questioned.

Each of these artists are rising stars, using paint in new and exciting ways. Together they provide a united celebration of paint. "Flatlands," allows an interplay of contrasting ideas and provides a platform to discuss the power of two dimensional work. It is in this reverence for the medium that the Nisus Gallery gladly presents its Annual Painting Show.

Enjoy the show.