

IN PERSPECTIVE

Art-world news and market updates, exhibitions and events.

Ritual Magic

ALFREDO GISHOLT'S abstractions seem to hold a lot of information—not just of technique, material, or mark-making, but of spaces and stuff, places and memories one might hold on to and look back on. It's a rare occurrence for abstract works to make a viewer feel like he or she has been somewhere or left something behind. But Gisholt accomplishes this by filling the canvas with a vast variety of interplaying forms, creating an effect that can appear almost collage-like. His agile line work,

which takes on various thicknesses, comes to the forefront of the broader, taller shapes that anchor his canvases like high-rises in a city. A palette that favors black and dark gray

creates depth and his lighter pops of bright color—golden yellow, pumpkin, an electric teal—a spark of liveliness. But one of the sole recurring figurative elements in Gisholt's



canvases are skulls—a symbol of *vanitas* painting denoting both transience and finality.

“Alfredo Gisholt: Rituals of Perception” is currently on view at Houston's Deborah Colton Gallery, through May 1. The show, which features both paintings and works on paper, occupies the entirety of the gallery's space and is also viewable virtually in an online viewing room.

Gisholt is from Mexico City but currently lives and works in Boston. The artist created the works featured in the Houston show partially

in response to his studio space, gathering inspiration from the way the light moves across the room and how objects form a pile in a corner.

Also serving as a muse is the seacoast of Maine, a location where Gisholt has spent a lot of time. Like his studio impressions, his observations of the ebb and flow of the tide and the clouds shifting in the Maine sky form the basis of subject and

structure on which he builds, configures, and reconfigures his pictorial realities. Engaging in what he considers the ritual of perception, Gisholt uses paint to make his perceptions manifest, imbuing his works with feeling and meaning.



The studio-inspired works are large—78 x 90 inches—and energetic. Works like *Night Studio-Ritual* (2020, oil on canvas) and *Night Studio III* (2019, oil on canvas) feel like urban landscapes, with tall, dark building-like shapes and noisy, black lines reminiscent of graffiti. *Night Studio II* (2019, oil on canvas), brings Philip Guston to mind, with its thick, blurred passages of



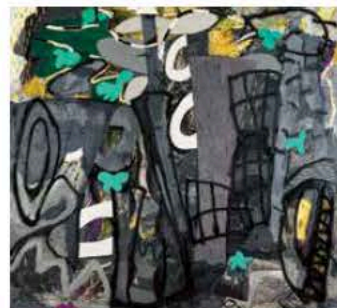
paint that almost seem to take on the plush texture of pastel. *Studio - Afternoon* (2020, oil on canvas) has a tumbling looseness. Though its formal language is similar to Gisholt's

night studio works, this painting has a perceivable lightness. The Maine-inspired works are considerably smaller—many of them 8 x 6 inches. These tiny abstract paintings

hint at being seascapes, not just formally but also in the wet, watery look of Gisholt's paint application. In *Maine Landscape #2* (2020, oil on canvas), a tumult of wavy lines mimic a craggy shore, while a thick swatch of orange gives the illusion of sunset.

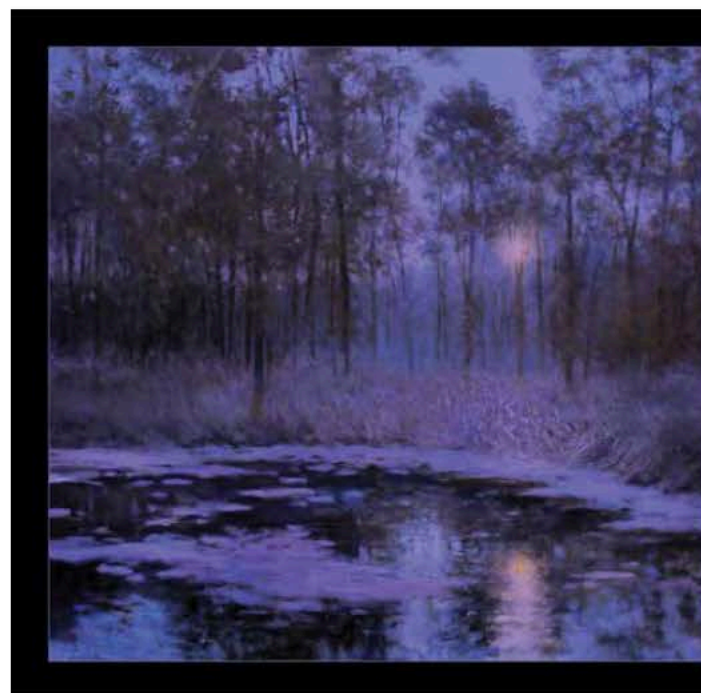
Maine Landscape #4 (2020, oil on canvas) is more formally abstract, with broad, liquid strokes of paint curving into each other.

The works on paper in the exhibition are substantially larger than the Maine paintings, at 48 x 60 inches. In



these pieces, Gisholt also limits his palette to black and white. In works like *Interior* (2020, mixed media on canvas), the artist's mark-making is less dense, but his layering of paper builds up a surface structure much like that of his paintings.

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND DEBORAH COLTON GALLERY



Thomas McNickle
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March 13 - April 24

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POUND BY MOONLIGHT, 2020, Oil on Canvas, 40 x 42 inches

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