

Max Morris

New Paintings

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New Paintings

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Dedicated to Darby, with great appreciation for your love; to my mother, Julie, with your love and unwavering support; and to Susan Harrington and Adam Fung, my encouraging and understanding guides on this journey. Thank you!

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ABSTRACT

New Paintings is a thesis exhibition that, through combinations of various processes, explores the materiality of paint on assorted surfaces. These processes are often employed as parameters that may move the work in an unanticipated new direction.

VITA

Max Morris was born on July 17, 1989 in Houston, Texas. He is the son of Brandon Morris and Julie Chadwick. He graduated from Carthage High School in 2007 in Carthage, Texas, and received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Drawing and Painting from The University of North Texas in 2013.

While working on his Master of Fine Arts, concentrating in Painting, he held a TCU Graduate Assistantship as teaching assistant to Drawing II and Advanced Painting (2014-15).

In the mode of process based, nonobjective painting, I explore the materiality of paint through assorted techniques. In my thesis statement, I will discuss my influences, process, and experimentation.

Having studied under Vincent Falsetta at University of North Texas for my Bachelor of Fine Arts in drawing and painting, I drew influence from the intricacy of marks made in his later seismic-like compositions. Falsetta, along with Gerhard Richter, Lynda Benglis, and Yago Hortal have played a big part in relation to my work as well influencing it. Their unique approaches to making their work made an impact on how I think about painting. My work can be seen through the lens “Provisional painting,” a genre coined by the critic Rafael Rubenstein, in terms of abandoning the idea of the “masterpiece” and accepting the tentative subjectiveness of knowing when a work is done and at times undermining such mindsets of when it is complete.

For my thesis exhibition I utilized various tools, including bowls, dustpans, paintbrushes, airbrushes, house paint rollers, and sandpapers. Each of these tools affects the surface of compositions in their own essential way. The following glossary of techniques is provided as insight to my process driven practice.

The bowl as a tool naturally lends itself to be used for pouring paint. When filling the bowl with specific, assorted colored paint in a certain order, the pouring of the paint produces intricate patterns depending on the distance and speed of how the paint is poured. The strategic layering of colors in the bowl can lead to new values and hues on the substrate that were not originally present within the bowl. This part of the process has piqued my interest in how color imposes itself on other colors, and how the interaction of values resolves itself in the production of new colors. Figure 2 exemplifies this technique used in conjunction with sanding away paint to reveal layers of color underneath.

The dustpan operates in a similar manner, but instead of pouring, it operates by sliding the paint from the pan, transferring it to the surface in a gestural manner. The difference is that the translation of the various colors in the pan are elongated on the substrate's surface, (as shown in fig. 3,) so it is important for me to imagine how the arrangement of paint in the pan will look stretched out on the canvas before acting out the process. A welcoming variable in this process is when there is just a little paint left in the dustpan, and the act of dragging it across the surface creates serialized,

punctuated marks, similar to abstracted arrow and heart shapes or some kind of binary code.

A paintbrush employed to apply paint can be obvious in the kinds of marks it makes, and I at times use the brush to modify other marks made by other tools like the bowl and dustpan. Effectively the brush aids in making other marks not look like themselves, as seen in fig. 4.

The airbrush is useful when utilized in conjunction with modeling paste, an acrylic-binding medium. When the opaque white, thick paste has been applied to a surface with a brush, I scumble the medium on the surface with an airbrush, spraying colors at specific angles, revealing hidden detail held within minimal gestures. Fig. 5 is an example of this technique within the Payne's gray trapezoidal shapes.

The house paint roller can be used as a printing mechanism by loading various colors in particular patterns. Or it can be used to simply modify or soften any other mark made by another tool as in fig. 6.

Water loaded with color, similar to the airbrush, is worthwhile to draw out detail from an otherwise minimal composition. Water used in conjunction with all of the other tools adds an element of surprise as well

as a facilitation of integrating various techniques, for instance in fig. 4 with the dark violet areas interacting with the peachy orange mass.

The application of paint is influenced by the substrate, which range from stretched and unstretched canvas, to steel shelves, wood panels, and sheets of glass. Particularly the application of paint to glass for me is a process in itself.

By pressing a sheet of glass onto the surface of a still wet composition, the visual information is transferred to the glass, creating a mono-print. By doing so, the glass works directly to connect to other works by sharing similar characteristics of gesture and color. Sometimes these pressings of paint to glass are made in a non-linear way. Several pressings can take place before the glasswork's completion, and at times, scraping away paint from the glass and the reapplication of paint has been a part of the process. A series of these glassworks are pictured in fig. 7.

Unintended marks that sometimes occur are what keep the act of painting interesting for me. In order to notice different aspects in the creation of my work, experimentation has been crucial. Practically every process I utilize has been completed by trial and error. Chance takes on an active role in the accumulation of form upon the surface. I find myself

studying marks of chance while still in their liquid form, figuring out what exactly led to their creation.

The challenge is utilizing chance as an effective tool. Within parameters set forth by the process, the act of throwing in risk as a cohesive variable will offset my direction from past experiments. This counteracting of my instinctual gestures has led to more expansive, thematic qualities that make up this series.

Many times practices have occurred with error, and I have lost many worthwhile compositions. Layers upon layers of paint have been applied on the same surface without a composition with the least bit of sensibility ever coming to fruition. However from these “duds” I have learned something from the process, and the challenge of resolving something taken so far from where it was originally intended (see fig. 8) is another aspect that through painting appeals to my interest in problem solving, transformation, and the discernment of knowing when my work is done.

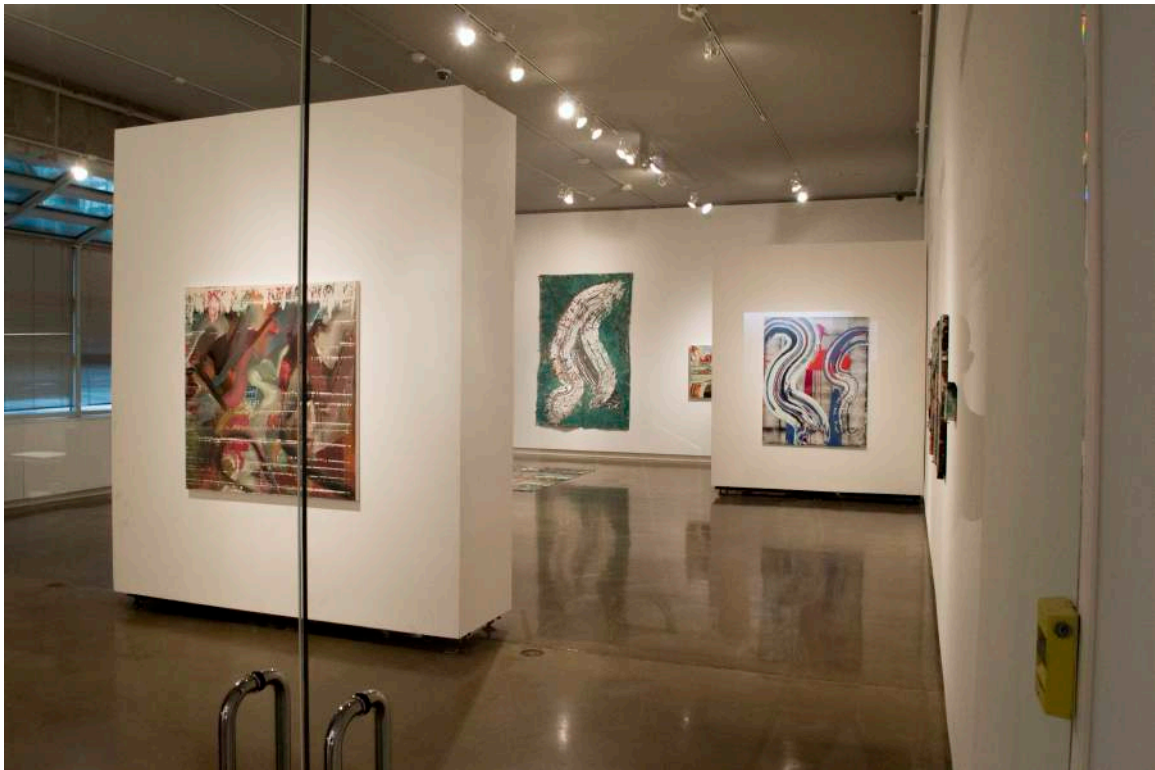


Fig 1



Fig 2: use of the bowl as a tool

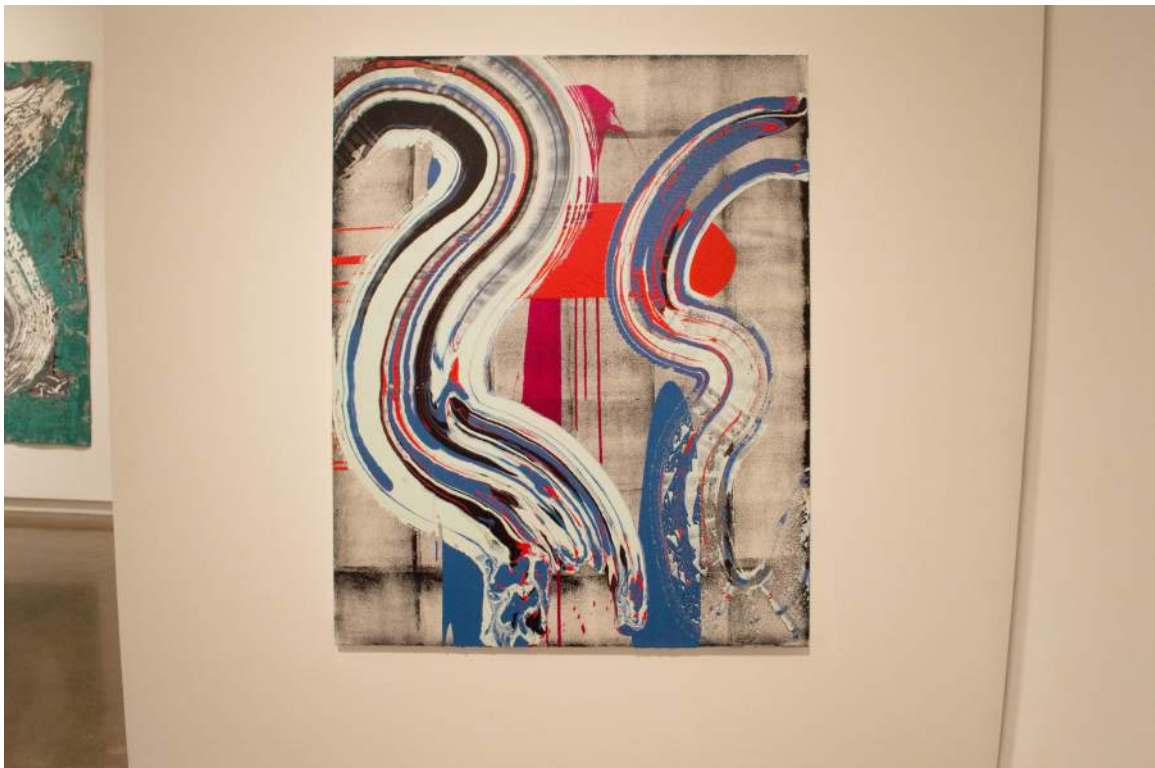


Fig 3: use of the dustpan as a tool



Fig 4: [right] use of the paintbrush to modify another mark [left] use of water to modify another mark



Fig 5: use of an airbrush in the trapezoidal areas



Fig 6: use of the house paint roller [middle right in composition]



Fig 7: glassworks

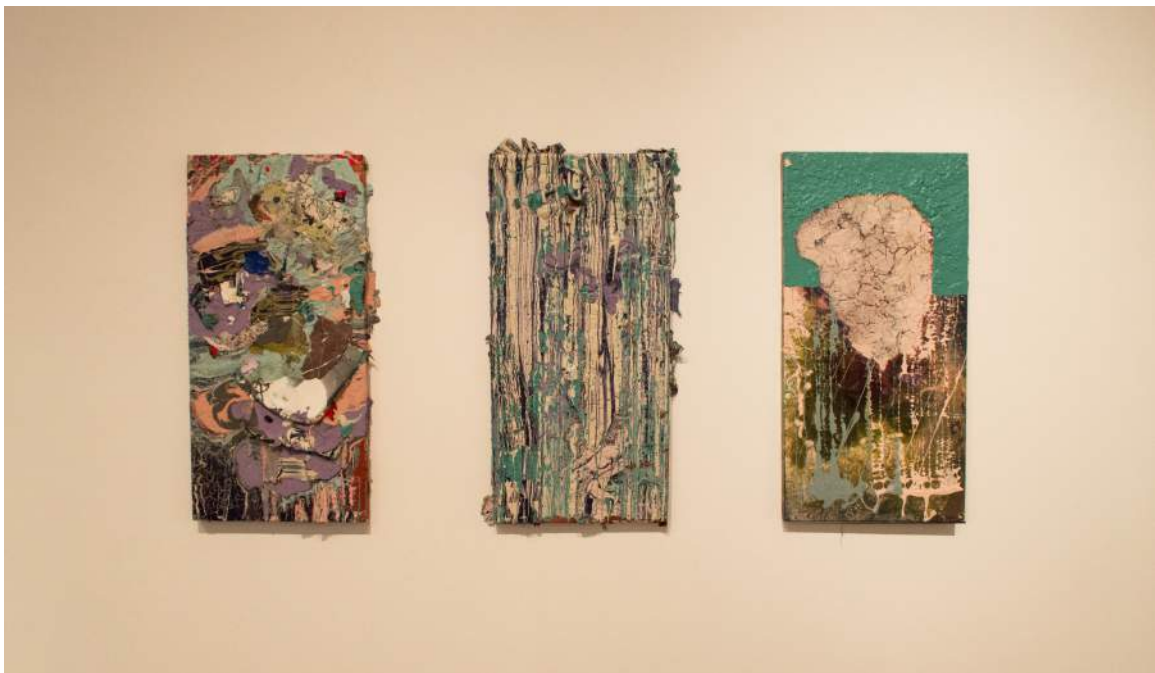


Fig 8: steel panels with accumulation of paint



Fig 9



Fig 10



Fig 11



Fig 12



Fig 13



Fig 13