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Henry Jackson: *Sight Becomes Insight*

Exhibition Dates: October 5 –
November 4, 2018

Artist Reception: October 5, 5-7 pm

Gallery Hours: Mon – Fri, 10-6
Sat, 10-5

LewAllen Galleries

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Untitled #24-18, 2018

Oil based mixed media on panel, 12 x 12 in

Santa Fe, NM – Henry Jackson’s mastery of color and composition rank him among the most accomplished of abstract expressionist painters working today. Combining abstraction with alternating degrees of figuration, the San Francisco artist carries forward influences from earlier Bay Area Figurative forebears while bringing to his work entirely new and fresh dimensions of process and material.

Jackson’s canvases and works on paper are lit with vibrant colors and swathed in rich textures. At the heart of Jackson’s artistic practice is the figure, and this impetus results on occasion in visible human forms emanating outward from elemental environments of gestural abstraction. His work often involves reconceiving our notion of the human figure, relating the body through the physical character of his canvasses rather than more familiar imagery. An exhibition of recent work by Henry Jackson entitled *Sight Becomes Insight* opens at LewAllen Galleries with an artist reception on Friday, October 5 from 5-7 PM and remains on view through November 4th.



Untitled #25-18, 2018

Oil based mixed media on panel, 12 x 12 in

The appearance of figure in Jackson’s work resists definition and specificity. They are hinted at more than depicted and seem perfectly imperfect – apparitions of personhood suspended within elemental, nonphysical settings of kaleidoscopic color and variegated texture. Jackson says of this intentional lack of identifiable feature or form, “Shapes emerge and perish almost simultaneously within their environment, and this revealing does not come easy.... What remains from this exhaustive struggle are agitated, irreducible forms. This tearing down of the figure is where I begin to see truth.”

As the title of this exhibition makes reference, the paintings that make up *Sight Becomes Insight* spring from both intuition and cumulative experience. Careful consideration of Jackson’s art reveals a multifaceted combination of various rival impulses: figuration and

abstraction, instinct and intention, body and spirit. These impulses contribute to a sense of unearthing: for Jackson, truth lies beneath thought, beneath certainty or inevitability. Rather than literal record of his thoughts or observations, his paintings attend to inner, indefinable elemental truths or emotions that could only have been freed through paint. Their spirit is illuminated through personal exploration and expressed by Jackson through emanations in oil and cold wax.

Over a career spanning more than 25 years, Jackson has evolved a unique way of probing the inner world of human feeling, and his striking works become its imprints—like Rorschachs of the human psyche. His work seems to possess indistinct but resonant connections to some primal shared past. Acknowledging this aspect of his work, Jackson says, “I’ve always been interested in archaeology, the discovery of what was. Which is why my work has a primitive look and feel to it. That is intentional. I think the primitive is something we all relate to naturally. Whether or not the viewer realizes it. It is my hope that that rawness will be the catalyst to want to go into the work.”



Untitled #79-18, 2018
Oil based mixed media on panel, 40 x 38 in

Works in this exhibition offer further deconstruction of Jackson’s figures into suggestions of formless, elemental energy through layers upon layers of lively, muscular color. Many of these paintings can also be read as investigations into pure abstraction; still, Jackson recognizes the impulse in his viewers to synthesize shape and brushstroke into form or something resembling the figure. In any case, evidence of the body is tangible in the visceral, primal textures on the canvas, and in it the inferred memory of the artist’s gesture. “In these works, the figure becomes one with environment, so they are celebrated in unison,” Jackson says. “The focus here is on color, which creates a sense of hope.” Perhaps never before has Jackson’s art rejoiced so completely, so freely in the arresting possibilities of color.

A San Francisco native and resident, Henry Jackson studied fine art and environmental design at San



Untitled #98-18, 2018
Oil & mixed media on paper, 48” x 50”

Francisco State University and the California College of the Arts - Oakland, California. Jackson is a recipient of many awards including: Four-time Full Fellowship Awards / Artist Residency at MACA, Monte Azul, Costa Rica; Artist-in-Residency Award (first recipient), Full Fellowship Award, Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, Vermont; Nathan Olivera Fellowship Award, presented by the MMG Foundation, San Francisco, California. Jackson’s work is exhibited nationally and internationally and is in the permanent collection of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, the Auchenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts at the Palace of the Legion of Honor - San Francisco, California; The de Saisset Museum - Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, California, and The Boise Art Museum, Boise, Idaho.