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# 栃木県立美術館

TOCHIGI PREFECTURAL MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

Hugh Scott-Douglas  
Tochigi Prefectural Museum, Japan  
April 16 - June 19, 2016

Weaving together three distinct series of work, Scott-Douglas draws on the idea of the 'bouquet', applying its representational and emblematic connotations to his c-prints, dunnage bag sculptures and slide projections. Within the context of this exhibition, the bouquet functions as a symbol of the complex architecture that governs our socioeconomic networks. Individually, each flower exists as a sovereign being, free in its solitude, often specific to a particular region, growing as one, an assembly line from root to stem, all parts of the plant serving the production of the bloom. Collected and arranged in a vase, a new form results as these separate entities become a new whole, controlled by someone else and repurposed to serve their wishes or ends.

Scott-Douglas employs this idea of the transformation from a sovereign being to a controlled part of a collective existence — a bouquet — to allude to the varying globalized networks of production as they are commoditized, often through decentralized means of production (controlled by other's choices and logic), alienated from itself in that process, and removed from its sense of specificity and singularity.

The first series features 13 photographic works, images of a standard grid of LED lights, initially used to control the ambient light environment (allocating a highly defined spatial logic to each photographic composition). Set in the grid, the individual lights form a bouquet, losing their distinctiveness. In these images, the separation between them blurs, they become a cog in an affect-based production line, serving not their own purpose by that to which the grid is put. In a playful pun on the idea of the bouquet, these blurred images of lights, in a vase-like frame of black, are produced by a "bokeh" technique (which breaks down the light in aperture blades of a camera). In effect, background and foreground collapse within a process that is read and generated by a machine. The haziness produced by focusing the lens on the out-of-focus parts of the image, stark in form yet ambiguous in identity, is a further visual pun when linked to the Japanese word "boke" (which represents a blurred state of mind, like jet lag — "jisa boke") Acknowledging the necessity of language within a system organized around decentralized production, through exploiting the language that organizes their production and serves as their title. The obvious wordplay highlights the cyclical relationship between the verbal and that which is being used to generate each pattern.

Active Surplus is built from composite images are collected and collaged together. Strips of 35mm trailer footage left behind when a bankrupt cinema auctioned off its remaining assets have been recombined with strips of acetate from the artist's studio. The slide presentations meld surplus with surplus to bring back into active service a new image, housed within the vase of a carousel. The trailers clips originally heralded a film not made, a promissory note of a story to be told. The negatives from old cyanotype photos are themselves discarded promissory notes for images to be made. The new film, playing to a new audience, wholly alienated from original source is now controlled by a different director.

Comprised of zipped-tied dunnage bags, which commonly operate as packing material, protecting goods in transit against the contingency in the movement and shifts, these sculptures fill a void with void — surface oxygen trapped in the service of another task. Originally, these dunnage bags were stuffed as protection in the vase of a container, 48 feet long, shipping goods across the void of an ocean. Now, as white "bouquets" they transform an immaterial common space, filling the space between objects, pressurizing the emptiness and giving it form. In controlling the walking path through the show, mapping the contours of this container, the sculpture steers traffic through the conceptual landscape far removed from the original service and formal operations the raw industrial material was intended to serve.

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# ARTNEWS

## HUGH SCOTT-DOUGLAS JOINS CASEY KAPLAN IN NEW YORK

BY Andrew Russeth  
September 2, 2015



Courtesy the artist and Casey Kaplan, New York

Scott-Douglas is also represented by Blum & Poe, of Los Angeles, Tokyo, and New York; Croy Nielsen, of Berlin; and Jessica Silverman Gallery, of San Francisco.

New York's Casey Kaplan gallery now represents Hugh Scott-Douglas, who is perhaps best known for abstract, pattern-rich panels and installations that he makes using a wide variety of techniques—from photography to laser cutting to inkjet printing—that take as their subject various methods and networks of production, translation, and transaction.

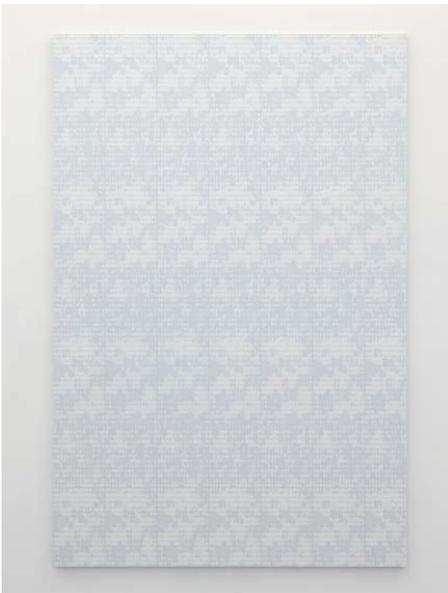
Scott-Douglas, who was born in 1988, is pretty busy at the moment, with solo shows on tap later this year at the Rosenwald-Wolf Gallery at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia and Blum & Poe's New York gallery, and another scheduled for the Togichi Prefectural Museum of Fine Arts in Tochigi, Japan, next year.

Though his last solo show in New York was back in 2012 at Clifton Benevento, some New Yorkers may have caught his work in "Bloomington: Mall Of America, North Side Food Court, Across From Burger King & The Bank Of Payphones that don't take incoming calls," a commendably messy group show that Chelsea's Bortolami gallery staged at a temporary space in their neighborhood last year.

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# BLOUIN ARTINFO

## Top 5 Exhibitions in Hong Kong, September 2015



Hugh Scott-Douglas, *Untitled*, 2015. UV cured inkjet print on dibond, 203.2cm x 134.6cm. Courtesy of the artist and Simon Lee Gallery.

### Hugh Scott-Douglas at Simon Lee, September 11 through October 31, 2015

The young British artist's first solo exhibition in Hong Kong offers viewers a valuable glimpse into Scott-Douglas untiring explorations of how advancing digital technologies offer novel aesthetic positions that feed into a tradition of conceptual abstraction. In this body of new work, the artist has used a modified digital scanner to create a slow scan of watch gears, particles of dust and other debris, and ambient light as an initial source of material. But through repeated manipulations and intermediate processes, such as compression, export, and printing using industrial ink on aluminum panels, this visual information finds itself progressively obscured, altered, and transfigured into a specter-like trace of its former self. The bleached appearance of these works comes from the overexposure of the objects to a tray of bright LEDs placed over the scanner bed.

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# DETAILS

## 8 Emerging Artists to Watch Right Now

Remember these names—you'll be hearing a lot more about these up-and-comers soon enough.

BY MAXWELL WILLIAMS



### Hugh Scott-Douglas

AGE: 27

MEDIUM: Labyrinthine installations that include large laser-printed canvases deconstructing the language of currency

BONA FIDES: In the collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and Francois Pinault; auction sales above \$80,000

BACKSTORY: Born in England and raised in Canada, Scott-Douglas came of age in the tiny Toronto art scene, where he cofounded the influential Tomorrow Gallery. "I'm very envious of how, at such a young age, Hugh is so clued in to the workings of the art world," says the Japanese artist Takashi Murakami. "It was unimaginable for me at his age." Scott-Douglas' early canvases were made with old photographic techniques, but the recent output is thoroughly modern: enlarged fragments of \$100 bills and torn-up checks, high-priced watches, and other commodities. The focus on currency and consumer culture is interesting (some might say confrontational), given who is collecting his work. "I find his intellectual games highly inspirational," Murakami says. How does Scott-Douglas see it? "I don't think you'll find that anything I've written is actively promoting a leftist agenda, but it's something that I spend almost all my time reading about," he explains. "There's a hint of it in my last press release that talks about a Lenin quote: 'The capitalists will sell us the rope with which we will hang them.'"

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# ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

## NEW WORK BY HUGH SCOTT-DOUGLAS AT SIMON LEE GALLERY

Text by Natalia Rachlin  
February 4, 2015

Last night Hugh Scott-Douglas—the young British-born, Brooklyn-based artist who has swiftly gained traction on the auction market and earned the interest of international collectors—opened his first solo show in London, at the Simon Lee Gallery in Mayfair.

In “Consumables,” Scott-Douglas pursues his exploration of the power and value of photographic imagery when transposed, transformed, or reframed. Though his work is often associated with the process-oriented vocabulary of conceptual abstraction, Scott-Douglas is undeniably engaged with contemporary photographic practice and the push-pull between analogue and digital.

His new “Active Surplus” series, for example, features the once commonplace plastic sleeves used to protect negative film after it had been processed, calling attention to their aesthetic value even when they’re left empty and rendered obsolete.

Another series in the exhibition borrows images from the Global Reports section of *The Economist* magazine; using acrylic gel to lift the pigment from the page, Scott-Douglas turns the original picture into a photographic positive, which he then enlarges and prints in large format with UV curable ink. Shown as a diptych, the color version next to a monochrome iteration, the images create eerie pairs, devoid of context, entirely removed from the current affairs to which they once related.

“With ‘Consumables’ I am interested in continuing my investigation into material and its relationship to networks of production, consumption, and distribution, as well as material relative to the body, artistic agency, and authorship,” says Scott-Douglas. “Regarding the works in the exhibition, I really see them all in conversation with one another and consider the whole thing as a sort of constellation, each point in the constellation signaling potential threads between the bodies of work that can be imagined by the viewer.”

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# 艺术界 LEAP

THE INTERNATIONAL ART MAGAZINE OF CONTEMPORARY CHINA

## HUGH SCOTT-DOUGLAS: “Promises to Pay in Solid Substance”

Written by Marie Martraire

October 14, 2014



Hugh Scott-Douglas,  
“Promises to Pay in Solid  
Substance,” 2014, Jessica  
Silverman Gallery, San  
Francisco. Installation  
view. Courtesy of Jessica  
Silverman Gallery and the  
artist.

IN HIS ESSAY “From Image to Media File: Art in the Age of Digitalization,” art critic, media theorist, and philosopher Boris Groys describes the notion of “original” for digital photographs as no longer accurate.[1] In today’s world of digitized images and virtual means of distribution, digital pictures have rather become copies, often absorbed into an invisible and intangible space—the web—where the notion of original, ownership and authorship have lost their initial meaning.

Brooklyn-based artist Hugh Scott-Douglas similarly considers questions raised by the immateriality of digital photography in his solo exhibition at Jessica Silverman Gallery in San Francisco. The exhibition features four of the artist’s new or recent series that visually stage different relationships between original and copy, visible and invisible, tangibility and intangibility. Together, the four series investigate questions raised by the materiality of digital photographs, the way these photographs circulate through today’s digital realm, and the value system these images represent.

The exhibition layout comes to underline these explorations while creating complex associations between them. For instance, on each wall, one photograph from “The Economist” series (in which Scott-Douglas appropriated, processed, and enlarged uncredited images from English-language weekly newspaper The Economist) is hung next to another from the “Screentones” series, so close that they almost create a diptych. This pairing seems to suggest a connection between the appropriation and acknowledgement of the media source, and the materialization of Scott-Douglas’s work-making processes through its residues. Perhaps this installation, ironically, comments on the almost non-existent authorship and ownership of images in today’s news media. Yet, Scott-Douglas’s process—appropriating, processing, recording, enlarging—can possibly emphasize his personal attempt to negotiate the currency of the image in today’s society of spectacle. The artist exhibits the invisible, making copying reversible by transforming a copy into an original.

*“Promises to Pay in Solid Substance” is at Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco, CA, United States, September 5 – November 1, 2014*



Hugh Scott-Douglas, *Untitled*, 2014. Set of ten images, UV curable ink on styrene in frame, wrapped in polyester with tape, 18 1/4 x 13 1/4 inches each. Courtesy of Jessica Silverman Gallery and the artist.

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# BLOUIN ARTINFO

## Hugh Scott-Douglas Takes on Amazon.com at Jessica Silverman Gallery

Written by Francesca Sonara  
October 25, 2014



An installation view of Hugh Scott-Douglas's "Promises to Pay in Solid Substance" at Jessica Silverman Gallery.  
(Courtesy of the artist and Jessica Silverman Gallery)

Jessica Silverman Gallery's location in the Tenderloin district, an area known for its resistance of gentrification and general seediness, provides a compelling backdrop for Hugh Scott-Douglas's "Promises to Pay in Solid Substance," open through November 1.

Outside, the neighborhood recalls a pre-technology boom San Francisco. Inside, viewers are ushered into the present via the artist's material exploration of modern economics and new technologies. Happily, Scott-Douglas forgoes multimedia apparati, choosing instead to demonstrate the nuance of digital development through the analog. The series "Heavy Images" (all works 2014) displays hefty billboard prints rolled up on their plywood crates. No longer useful, these obscured advertisements are more representative of the costs or resources required to produce them than the products they initially marketed. Now extraneous, these oversize objects make a strong argument for digital marketing's renewable nature.

Maybe "Heavy Images" is a sophisticated endorsement for Internet marketing, but the show doesn't let the modality off so easily. Amazon.com presents snapshots of an Amazon distribution center's surfeit shipping materials. Cardboard boxes and more packing paraphernalia are seen spilling out into a communal hallway in Brooklyn. The commentary on Amazon's appreciable contribution to waste generation continues outside the photograph: wrapped in plastic, the photos wrapped in the same materials they capture. The resultant work cleverly amplifies society's continued dependence on systems born of our capitalist tendencies. Even as we shop online to save gas, we send out a fleet of delivery trucks.

Works on wood panels from the "Screentones" and "The Economist" series similarly adopt a language of process in exploration of society's relationship to new media. Displayed in diptych formation, pictures appropriated from The Economist hang alongside images of debris from the artist's studio. Before being printed onto the panels, the dust bunnies and journalistic sources were scanned, mapping a circuitous route wherein the tangible begets the digital begets the tangible. And while the "tangibles" in "Promises to Pay in Solid Substance" border on the tedious at times, they certainly serve as a valuable reminder to a city hellbent on "innovation." Even with the considerable advancements of the past decade, our material world remains a concern. A version of this article appears in the December 2014 issue of Modern Painters magazine.

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## “Must See Painting Shows – October 2014”

THE  
HUFFINGTON  
POST

Written by Steven Zevitas  
October 9, 2014

After a sleepy summer, the art world is once again up and running full tilt. Among the hundreds of painting shows on view throughout the country this month are close to three dozen solos by New American

Paintings' alumni. They range from shows by talented emerging artists such as Samantha Bittman at Andrew Rafacz in Chi-



cago and Suzannah Sinclair at Samson in Boston to strong mid-career painters such as the phenomenal Sarah McEneaney at Tibor de Nagy Gallery in New York City and Emily Eveleth at Miller Yezerksi Gallery in Boston. I want to give a special shout out to my buddy Eddie Martinez, whose show at the new Kohn Gallery space in Los Angeles confirms what many already knew: Eddie is one of the best natural painters of his generation.

There is a lot of good abstraction on view this month. For those in New York City, the fearless Chris Martin has his debut at Anton Kern Gallery, the much-hyped Norwegian artist Fredrik Vaerslev can be considered at Andrew Kreps Gallery, and one of Boston's best kept secrets, Jesse Littlefield, has his first major solo at Zieher

Smith & Horton. Also in New York, co-curator for the 2014 Whitney Biennial and juror for the 2015 Northeast issue of New American Paintings, Michelle Grabner, has just opened a must-see show at James Cohan Gallery. In Los Angeles, don't miss Sam Falls at Hannah Hoffman Gallery and Pia Fries at Christopher Grimes Gallery. If you are in the Bay Area, visit Jessica Silverman Gallery to see the work of Hugh Scott-Douglas, who, like an increasing number of emerging artists, is obsessed with process.

While abstraction continues to look good this season, representational painting has been making a comeback and it owns the month. Over the past two years, more and more young artists have been engaging with imagery, in particular the figure. There are the aforementioned exhibitions by Sarah McEneaney and Suzannah Sinclair to consider. In New York City, emerging artist Gina Beavers continues to push impasto to the limits in her new group of paintings at Clifton Benevento and the virtuosic Angela Dufresne has a new suite of paintings with figure in landscape at Monya Rowe Gallery. Other shows of note around the country include: Storm Tharp at PDX in Portland, OR; Angela Fraleigh at Inman Gallery in Houston; Whitney Bedford at Carrie Secrist in Chicago; and the group show "Bedtime Stories" at Alpha Gallery in Boston.

In a quiet, but extraordinary exhibition at Matthew Marks Gallery in New York, LA-based artist Paul Sietsema renders carefully selected imagery with such technical dexterity that they almost revert to real objects. Sietsema is not interested in trompe-l'oeil for the sake of showing off his technical chops; at the end of the day, his paintings and works on paper are a highly considered critique of the production of cultural objects and the varying roles that they play as they leave the studio and circulate in the world. Taken as a whole, this exhibition represents the various

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# Artspace

## 8 of the Best Artworks at EXPO Chicago 2014

HUGH SCOTT-DOUGLAS

From the "Economist" and "Heavy Images" series (both 2014)

Jessica Silverman Gallery

\$80,000 for the painting, \$10,000 for the sculpture



Much-buzzed as a young artist to watch, the twenty-something Hugh Scott-Douglas makes work that digs into the various ways visual information gets transferred from one medium to another, and the conceptual hiccups that arise along the way. San Francisco's Jessica Silverman is currently showing three new bodies of his work at her gallery, and two are represented at the fair: the painting is from the "Economist" series, in which he lifts illustrations from the magazine (which famously doesn't provide bylines for its articles or images) by brushing them with clear acrylic gel, peeling the gel off, then scanning it and blowing it up for an abstracted reverse image; the sculpture is from his "Heavy Images" series, in which he sources old billboard advertisements over the web, rolls them up, and pairs them with coffin-like shipping crates as a commentary on that classic highway-friendly medium's ungainly obsolescence in the age of the digital file and LED sign.

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# San Francisco Chronicle

## Scott-Douglas Mourns the Image

Written by Kenneth Baker  
September 19, 2014

Jessica Silverman samples four strains of work by New Yorker Hugh Scott-Douglas, an artist whose work can bear a heavy load of theoretical reflection, with little sacrifice of aesthetic impact.

In each series, Scott-Douglas stages strange adventures of dematerialization and rematerialization made possible by digital technology. The work on view concerns divergences between the circulation of images and of the stuff they depict.

In the most eye-catching series, he skimmed information from uncredited images in the Economist, such as that of copper production factory floor in "Untitled" (2014), and reprocessed it digitally and photographically, preserving and enlarging the raster pattern of the half-tone "original," incidentally activating visual references to Sigmar Polke (1941-2010) and Roy Lichtenstein (1923-1997).

Almost every move Scott-Douglas makes strikes sparks in the allusive field that conceptual art internationally has generated since its inception half a century ago or more. When he makes big photographic enlargements of dust patterns collected in his studio with an obsolete graphic design tool called Letratone, one immediately thinks of "Dust Breeding" (1920), Man Ray's famous photo of Marcel Duchamp's dust-clotted "Large Glass," and of John Cage's liking for phenomena generative of uncomposed pitch patterns.

But Scott-Douglas' most striking work here is a series of expired and dismantled billboards, one bearing the words "limited time only." Each billboard probably began life as a huge digital file, but has ended it folded and wrapped and stuffed into a coffin-like shipping box.

The "de-collage" tendency of artists such as Jacques Villeglé and Mimmo Rotella (1918-2006) gave defunct billboards and postings an artistic afterlife, as has contemporary artist Mark Bradford. Scott-Douglas treats them like corpses, but not without a certain tenderness.

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## The mechanics of money: in conversation with Hugh Scott-Douglas

by Josie Thaddeus-Johns  
May 5th, 2014



Hugh Scott-Douglas,  
Chopped Bill, 2014.  
Dye sublimation on  
linen. 200 x 100  
x 4 cm. Courtesy  
Croy Nielsen. Photo  
Joachim Schulz

At the American artist's first ever show at Gallery Weekend Berlin, Sleek caught up with Hugh Scott-Douglas at Croy Nielsen to talk about the value of the image and interacting markets in his most recent work, based on banknotes and the "chopmarks" found on them.

"This is a newer series of work for me that I started showing in Switzerland. So far, it's untitled but is referred to as "chopped bills", which is the direct name of the phenomenon that's occurring visually on one level.

My first interest in these "chopmarks" is the anti-counterfeiting. A company called Digimarc, founded by an American astrophysicist, who developed this technological platform of stenographical imaging – invisible digital watermarking. Originally, he did it to stop people pirating some photos he had taken of Jupiter – he didn't want to jeopardise the artistic integrity of the images by imposing a direct watermark on them, so he created this invisible way of anti-counterfeiting. The practical application of that now is that it prevents the counterfeiting of money. It presents itself in a number of different ways – the most visually obvious one is a specific set of dots – called the EURrion constellation. If you try to scan a bill and put it into an editing program, it will shut itself down, as a way to prevent counterfeiting.

That's the mechanics of the bill, it's not an image that allows itself to be appropriated. If we think of Photoshop and the scanner as contemporary tools of the photographer, with Richard Prince, for example, as a precedent, those images are protected on an intellectual level from copyright: their ability to be appropriated is epistemologically black and white. My interest in working with currency in this way is because there's something physical that prevents its appropriation, that is directly interfering with the tools of the artist.

The second area of interest comes from the marks: the firecracker, the toxic logo, this star shape. For this show I've focused more specifically on graffiti-oriented ones, but there are others that are more clerical in their form. My interest in those marks isn't what their purpose is, but in the fact that their purpose is so oblique. They're put there by an unknown assailant – banks, casinos, drug dealers, graffiti – it could be any number of things. For me, the real point of interest is more from our lack of ability to understand what they are. They're a purely speculative moment.

Interestingly enough, this completely random act of mark-making, when combined with this structured image, creates a breakdown in the structure of the bills. Both visually because they have this organic quality, but also because in adding this foreign element to the bill, it stops the bill being recognised as currency. The project of the artist becomes one of formatting and framing the graphic content so that the mark occupies enough of the visual space that scanners no longer recognise it as a bill. The images are authored by their contingency.

Paper currency represents something so abstract, so broken from any material foundation: all economy is abstract. In my previous work with cyanotypes, I liked creating a container of value that was also hollow, in the sense that I was making blueprints that were finished works and then disseminated as such. This work, by contrast, isn't so dependent on its material, it's more about the image as material, and that would be the image of currency.



Hugh Scott-Douglas, Delcampe.net, Transportation Tickets, April 9, 2014 at 12:21 PM, 2014 Printed Newspaper (Edition starts at 2000 pieces, final title will include the original edition and acknowledge the deficit which has arrived as a result of the distribution of the object), 2014. 103 x 104 x 73 cm. Courtesy Croy Nielsen. Photo Joachim Schulz

These paper sculptures are being shown for the first time here. If the other works are authored by contingency, these are authored by debt. These are made of newsprint posters, with 48 unique images, all taken from this website, Delcampe.net, a website that is like Ebay for old paper. These are the first 48 images for a specific search term. I have old transport tickets, which are actually really beautiful, and the others are old invoices and commercial documents. Each represents this specific moment in time, the particular things that are for sale, but I'm also really interested in how it's a resource that's continually in flux. It's in flux because of the markets of availability and demand. To take it and make it into a static image makes it possible to redistribute it again, so you have one market which is the digital online economy of ecommerce and then there's another in the gallery.

These papers are available to be taken for the duration of the exhibition, but at the end of the exhibition it becomes frozen – acknowledging the debt that it's incurred by sitting here. I see this like the time of exposure: the image-object develops through its exposure to the acquisitive hand. All the paper artefacts we work with are all expended containers of value in some way or another, like a stamp or a transportation ticket. There's something interesting to me in reinstating value to something that claimed a particular value at one time or another. The economy of collectibles in general really reflects market demand – for example people who sell a specific issue of 5 euro notes for 8 euros apiece. It's inflated and then deflated and then reinflated as a collectible and then reinflated in the gallery to a degree that's even further from its original value!"

**Hugh Scott-Douglas is showing at Croy Nielsen until May 31 2014**

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# FLAUNT

## HUGH SCOTT-DOUGLAS: “I Just Want to Manufacture Some Waste”

Written by Sarah Nicole Prickett  
December 13, 2013



**WE USED TO LAUNCH SHIPS**, says the sign at the gate.  
**NOW WE LAUNCH BUSINESSES.**

I am in the Brooklyn Navy Yard for two reasons: One, I am here to interview the 25-year-old conceptual artist Hugh Scott-Douglas, a guy I could profile off the top of my head (I’ve known and liked him since 2010, when we both lived in Toronto and he had just graduated with a BFA in sculpture from Ontario College of Art & Design). Two, I’m in love with edges, and in this recently industrial landscape you can watch the last scraps of American manufacturing turn to flotsam under the bridge.

Today in his studio, Hugh is making editions of a work comprising: a wooden plank; an opened cardboard box; and a bundle of newsprint, each page of which is printed in recycled ink from newspaper images that Hugh moved slightly on the scanner to re-blend the discrete units of

color and “forge a new liquid value—in that it’s interacted with the hand of the author. There’s a fracture between body and paint.”

He picks up a piece of Letraset “screentone” paper—which is used by manga artists to give a dotmatrix look to the page—and applies it sticky-side-down to the concrete floor. It comes up scratched and flecked with debris. Later, he will scan it and blow it up to produce a flat, inky “negation.” It’s like that Asger Jorn quote: “There are more things on the earth of a picture than in the heaven of aesthetic theory.” Hugh knows this—and is also one to quote Jorn—but he cannot resist the heaven.

For a new sculpture, Hugh wrapped a pedestal in silk, which he first printed with images of cancelled stamps, then baked in epoxy so the colors won't bleed. "Death," he explains, "is hand in hand with heat." In another series, he alters images of foreign currency until Photoshop can no longer recognize and ban them as counterfeit, and then prints them on plywood sheets. "Everything I do pushes materiality until the form collapses the whole," he says.

In the age of digital reproduction, it is too easy to make "perfect." Instead, to create *sui generis* value, an artist must hold a zoom lens to human error. He must also hold it himself. "I stopped having assistants," says Hugh, when I ask who does the heavy lifting. "When you have assistants, there always has to be work for them to do, and so the time spent on work becomes neither useful nor valuable."

Somewhere in Miami there is a painting by Nate Lowman of a check made out to Nate Lowman. The amount is \$3,000, payable in 2004. It is signed by Donald Rubell. In 2011, the year Lowman sold his "Trash Landing Marilyn #12" for \$725,000 at auction, Donald Rubell bought "First Check." The painting hangs in the Rubell Family Collection, where it looks—to me—more like a .gif of the art market, looping from status to value and back to status without ever acquiring worth.

Work like Hugh's wants to find a glitch in the loop. While many young or "downtown" artists at the turn of the millennium became flâneurs in love with their reflections, and did not make but rather "found" art, turning garbage from the street into expensive garbage in galleries, others reacted by becoming drifters, or ragpickers, hoping—through a process-heavy praxis—to salvage some meaning from disuse. "The project," says Hugh, "becomes for a work to take up all its material in making itself." Which, as the sign at the gates would suggest, is a business-like and comforting aim: To manufacture want without waste.

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# FLAUNT

## HUGH SCOTT-DOUGLAS: “The Meteoric Rise of Blue”

Written by Dr. James Fox  
September 6, 2013



Hugh Scott-Douglas, “Untitled,” Cyanotype on line, 2011

We like to think that color is a matter of personal taste, but one of them is worshipped above all others. Blue is the world’s best-loved hue by a stretch, and it’s been top of the pile for quite some time. A survey recently found that 40 percent of people call blue their favorite color. And it’s ranked number one in every country on the planet.

But blue isn’t just popular. It exerts a strange hold over us too. Scientists have proven that it can increase creativity. Psychologists have found that we’re more likely to trust companies with blue logos. And market researchers say Google’s links are blue because that color makes it hard for us to resist clicking them.

With all this evidence it’s difficult to deny that blue has conquered our world. But it wasn’t always that way. Remarkably, blue was the last major color to get a name. Languages around the world did not think of a word for blue things for a surprisingly long time. The ancient Greeks are perhaps the most noticeable. You can, for instance, read every

line of Homer and never come across ‘blue.’ Despite all that wonderful Greek weather, he thought the sea was ‘wine dark’ and the sky was ‘bronze.’

It may be because blue is uniquely enigmatic. It’s all around us, but it feels forever out of reach.

Because you can't touch the blueness of the sky; you can't bottle the blueness of the sea; and no matter how far you travel, you can never reach the blue horizon. And if something's forever unattainable, you don't really need a word for it.

But if blue was unattainable, how can it now be everywhere? When did it first enter our lives? And where did our love affair with it first begin?

The answer is in northern Afghanistan. There, beneath the mountains, is one of the oldest mines in the world. For millennia it has produced a mysterious blue stone called lapis lazuli. With a lot of strength, skill and patience, lapis lazuli was converted into a legendary blue pigment. The pigment was called 'ultramarine,' which means 'across the seas'—because that's where the lapis lazuli originated.

Ultramarine soon became a Medieval sensation. Artists, craftsmen and tailors were desperate to get hold of it. The demand was so intense that it became more expensive than gold. In fact, it was deemed to be so extravagant that governments across Europe prohibited citizens from wearing clothes in the color.

By 1500 only one person was special enough to wear ultramarine: the Virgin Mary. If you've gone to any major museum, or bought lots of Christmas cards, you'll probably have noticed that the Madonna is nearly always swathed in beautiful blue robes. It was a remarkable transformation: from almost nowhere, blue had become Europe's most sacred color. Maybe that's why Hercule Poirot always said 'sacre bleu.'

But that was only the first step in blue's journey into the center of our lives. The second moment came a few hundred years later, in 1800. And believe it or not, it was all because one young boy couldn't get to sleep. The boy was Heinrich von Ofterdingen, and he was the eponymous hero of a novel by the German writer Novalis.

Heinrich couldn't sleep because he was obsessed with a mysterious blue flower. So he embarked on a quest to find it. With that quest, blue lodged itself in the Romantic imagination, and it profoundly transformed the meaning of the color. Because from that point on, blue became the color of our deepest desires and most unsettling feelings.

For those of you who've had the blues, listened to the blues, or ever felt a bit blue, and thus connected that color to a dark emotional state, you're probably indebted, in part, to Heinrich's little flower. But no one plumbed the emotional depths of the color quite like Pablo Picasso.

Picasso's famed blue period began in 1901 when his best friend shot himself after an argument with his girlfriend. The suicide shook the young Picasso to his core, and before long blue crept into his paintings. We all know them. And with them Picasso did more than anyone to cement blue's status as the color of fear, loneliness, and despair.

But it wasn't all depressing. There was one more stage in blue's meteoric rise. It was December 1968 and the crew of Apollo 8 became the first humans to leave the Earth's orbit. They'd gone to see the moon but they made their most extraordinary discovery when they looked back. Because they saw, to their amazement, that they were looking at a blue planet—the color of our beautiful but fragile home.

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# Interview

## Discovery: Hugh Scott-Douglas

Written By Maxwell Williams  
Photo by Seth Fluker  
January 2013



The characters in the 1920 silent thriller *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, in which the title character keeps a somnambulist captive in a cabinet to carry out murder in his sleep, spin hypnotically around a soundstage filled with painted set pieces. They walk up stairs and hallways and rooms as if the goal wasn't simply seeking out a mysterious killer, but in the journey itself. Brooklyn-based artist Hugh Scott-Douglas has named his first solo show at Blum & Poe, Los Angeles, for the movie, as a tribute to the circuitous nature of this odyssey [opens Jan. 12].

In his work in cyanotypes, laser-cut canvases and slide shows, Scott-Douglas begins with a patterned motif, which he threads through each of his different series. He begins with the cyanotype, an outmoded photographic printing process that relies on sunlight to create blue-toned images, to develop these patterns on a canvas. The original pattern is then scanned from the cyanotype, and laser-cut into another canvas. The laser-cut canvas is then housed in an upright, custom-built road case (the kind you might see holding a musician's gear at a rock concert), which serves as a mobile frame on wheels. The cyanotypes are also the basis for a slideshow, where the blues are transferred into

photographic gels that are cut into slides to play in a slide reel.

The remnants of this process—the cyanotypes in the road cases, the laser-cut canvases, the slideshows—are all gathered and displayed, creating a sort of real-time signature on the gallery, whereupon Scott-Douglas can gauge the work; because even then, the gallery is all a part of the continuous process.

**AGE:** 24

**HOMETOWN:** Cambridge, England

**CURRENT CITY:** Brooklyn

**SOCIETY OF THE SPECTACLE:** If there is a grand thesis to my practice, it draws from trying to negotiate the currency of image. It's interesting to look at images that are both hyper-inflated and images that are deflated. I acknowledge cinema as the most inflated form of spectacle, and often draw from filmic examples, not so much for pictorial content of a film, but for the mechanics of the picture.

**FRAMING THE FRAME:** Mise en abyme is a simple phenomenon: things reflect in on themselves, or framing the frame. I was looking haphazardly on the Internet for examples from cinema that employ mise en abyme, and *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* comes up often in this regard. Its sets were all paintings on flat surfaces, so to create perspective everything was using a fictive pictorial space as the thrust. For the press release I've included a pictures of a door from the set, which carries on ad infinitum, black frame after black frame.

But also, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* is hailed as the first film to use mise en abyme narrative, or a dream sequence. My interest in the film developed before I had ever even seen it. This body of work is not really about that film; it's about the mechanics of that image—what gives that picture value.

**RECYCLE, REUSE, RINSE, REPEAT:** In the film, we have this sleepwalker, activated upon the opening of the cabinet. There's something interesting about that relationship to narrative structure. In this show, the laser-cuts function the same way. They're derived from files based on previously made cyanotypes that I've archived the image from. I see them as kind of "activating the sleepwalker" in the same way. There's this dormant file, and then you open it up and put it in this case as a way of displaying it, and it comes alive again, which is a nice way of giving a second meaning to the laser-cut works. It's reinvesting value.

**DURATIONAL AESTHETICS:** The road cases are about exhibition design, treated as a structure that temporarily accommodates the display of a work. They're part wall, and they're also part frame. It's an accommodating structure. There's something that makes them about their contexts. They have a life span in the same way that the cyanotypes do.

**METHOD ACTORS:** I would say if there's any sort of covalent bond that brings me and who I would establish as a peer group together, it would be methodology. The methodology is part an understanding of a material process, part research, part independent interest, or independent lexicon. [Brooklyn-based artist] Ben Schumacher, who I have collaborated with—he's an extremely close friend—he has a degree in architecture; that's where he's coming from, whereas I would say I'm much more interested in the mechanics of cinema. But he's establishing a very similar studio methodology.

**CHROMA CHAMELEON:** A facet of my work is chromatic. The cyanotype plate sits in the parking lot in front of my studio for 15 minutes. There are environmental factors that change ad infinitum as time passes—UV shifts, cloud cover increases or decreases, the position of the sun in the sky is moving—so the chroma of each cyanotype is slightly different, or sometimes vastly different, than the last based on that process. I'm using a computer-driven approach to amalgamating the chromatic value of each cyanotype, by reducing it to its most generalized blue. I do that just as simply as using the color picker tool in Photoshop.

From that, you have this very unique color, because the RGB value is just a number, it's infinitely varied. It's unique. However, as a way of quantifying that value, I transfer the chroma to a cinematic lighting gel of which there are not as many blues as there are blue tones generated by the cyanotypes.

They're never perfect. There's always a difference. The way it's quantifying or validating chromatic value became to develop a relationship to a readymade or a marketable product that is a lighting gel. I cut the gels up into 80 slides, and then give each one a time unit in the carousel of 11 and a quarter seconds, which culminates in a total time of 15 minutes. So it returns to the same amount of time that went into developing the color in the first place.

Scott-Douglas's work will also be featured in the group show "Pattern: Follow the Rules" at the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State, opening March 21, 2013.

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# CANADIANART

## Hugh Scott-Douglas on Toronto, Los Angeles & What's Next

BY LEAH SANDALS  
JANUARY 18, 2013



Hugh Scott-Douglas "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" 2013 Installation view Courtesy the artist and Blum & Poe, Los Angeles

Hugh Scott-Douglas is looking forward to a pretty big 2013. The 24-year-old artist, who was raised in Edmonton and Ottawa and graduated from OCAD University in 2010, opened a solo show at Los Angeles's Blum & Poe last week. He's also included in "Pattern: Follow the Rules" at the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum in Michigan, which opens in March. And in June, through San Francisco dealer Jessica Silverman, he'll be featured in Art Basel's Art Statements. Mixed in along the way is a move to New York with his wife, fashion designer Lara Vincent. Recently, Canadian Art caught up with Scott-Douglas by phone to discuss Toronto influences, decayed denim and his signature series of cyanotypes.

**Leah Sandals:** Currently on display at your Blum & Poe exhibition “The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari” is one of your cyanotype-on-cloth projects. You’ve also done a book of cyanotypes with Mousse. What drew you to this somewhat unusual medium?

**Hugh Scott-Douglas:** In school, I studied sculpture and became fascinated with the idea of negotiating the tactility of an object or an idea. That fascination is tied into another big narrative for me—the idea of negotiating the value or currency of an image. I’m interested in how images can have both inflated and deflated values, and in how we might negotiate them.

A lot of different works have come out of these themes. The cyanotypes in particular came out of trying to investigate the idea of the architect’s blueprint—the image before an image.

They became a way to investigate other areas of interest too, because blueprints are sort of graphic and they are a method of mechanical reproduction, but the process is also unstable and analog, which gives it this tactility I was referring to. It’s a very hands-on approach to the production of an image.

**LS:** A lot of the PR texts on your work emphasize its links to painting, cinema and theory. But when I saw your work at Jessica Silverman’s booth at NADA Miami 2011, I noticed many people were drawn to it in a visceral sense. How do you parse tactile or visceral appeal versus theoretical readings?

**HSD:** I think that’s sort of the project of the artist. We can speak about managing all of these very conceptual and theoretical positions, but ultimately we are dealing with a kind of affect-based—or we can call it commodity-based—object. We do call these the fine arts, so for me, at least, the conceptual exercise does need to bridge the gap into an object discussion.

There could be other ways of making a blueprint, for instance. But they might not be as beautiful as what I think I am doing—not to say that I think what I’m doing is most beautiful, but I am pleased with them as objects. When I first started working on the cyanotypes, I realized that this could be part of their potential.

**LS:** Your cyanotypes sometimes have a stained or aged quality. They seem to fit into a decayed aesthetic popular among artists of your age—or at least popular at that NADA fair, which had more than one decayed-mirror sculpture! I wonder how much this aesthetic might be related to growing up with a very digitally rendered, clean-looking visual culture. What are your thoughts?

**HSD:** I’m trying to think about what the root of my interest in that aesthetic would be born from. I don’t know if I ever considered it as a reaction to something digital.

I mean, some of this is just fashion as well—anyone who denies that is not being truthful, because these are trends that emerge on a broad level. Whether it’s by going through blogs on the Internet or by going to exhibitions of artists they admire, people begin to consume a certain aesthetic. Then it will shift as people begin to work in their studios.

I think that if you look back to artists like Martin Kippenberger or Sigmar Polke, this aesthetic may not be as fresh to our generation as it was to theirs. And even they’re borrowing from something else before that. It’s very much like a zipper—every part before it has a part to interlock to create this long strand that is history.

What I'm trying to highlight by noting connections like that to other artists and art movements is that there is something like a covalent bond or a locus that draws an aesthetic sensibility together over time; the factors that influence it are hard to pinpoint. I agree with you that this kind of aesthetic is absolutely present, but I'm not sure if its growth is as simple as a relationship to the digital.

I mean, I think back to the jeans that people my age wanted to wear when we were in high school, which were the caricature of what a distressed jean would have been—shredded and bleached ad infinitum. That was a very present aesthetic, and it was kind of born out of an Abercrombie and Fitch look, this tattered beach-bum kind of thing. It's possible you could stretch those jeans and they'd be a hit at NADA now.

**LS: Over the past few years in Toronto, you were involved in curatorial endeavours like the group show “Chopped & Screwed” at MKG127 and the operation of Tomorrow Gallery with Tara Downs and Aleksander Hardashnakov. What plans, if any, do you have to continue work of the curatorial kind?**

**HSD:** I find it really fascinating to work in that capacity.

The MKG project was almost an extension of my own practice, and it explored a number of things I was extremely interested in at the time. I mean, I write a lot, I research a lot, I spend a lot of time looking at art. Projects like that one are an extension of working in the studio. Through curating those kinds of projects, you learn a lot not only about other kinds of art, but also about your own art.

Tomorrow was a totally different kind of endeavour. That came out of travelling a lot—my family was living in Europe while I was in university, so I was spending 26 weeks of the year at OCAD and the rest of my time travelling between Paris and Berlin and London. I saw so much art in that period of time.

Going and seeing all that art and then coming back to the classroom at OCAD or to the galleries on Tecumseth or Queen became a very frustrating experience, because there was so evidently a fracture between what was happening in the rest of the world and what was happening in Toronto. This fracture was also confusing because Toronto is a major metropolitan centre; there's lots of money, and lots of cultured, interested people, but there's not much support from the market. And the market is generally what brings new art to places quickly these days—at least, more quickly than institutions can.

So Tomorrow became a way for us to bring some of the art that we thought wasn't getting seen to Toronto.

**LS: OCAD peers like Downs and Hardashnakov have been a big influence on you. Who in terms of OCAD teachers was an influence?**

**HSD:** Ian Carr-Harris is such an amazing teacher, and he really supported a lot of my projects. So did George Boileau and Ginette Legaré. Those are basically the thesis advisors I had.

I never enjoyed being in the classroom that much, and often I would take the assignments and do sort of what I liked with them, which was not always well received by the college. But those guys [Carr-Harris, Boileau and Legaré] pretty much always accommodated my projects as I presented

them, which was fantastic.

I did have other professors who basically just told me to stop and give up what I was doing, because it wasn't going anywhere. It's really detrimental for a young student to hear that from somebody that they think is in a position of power.

But those three really stood behind me. And it gave me the confidence to do what I'm doing now

**LS: It's been a big few years. What are you hoping will happen next?**

**HSD:** I'm really just, at this moment, looking forward to some time in the studio. Lately, I've been really focused on film, both 35mm and video, and I would like to keep working and see what comes from that.

**LS: As you move forward, what artworks continue to serve as touchstones or inspirations?**

**HSD:** Growing up, I was really struck by Abstract Expressionism. Richard Diebenkorn and Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman were my favourites when I was 14 or 15. And I still love it—the Rothko room at the Tate remains totally magical. I don't know if I'm as engaged with it now as I was then, but it still resonates.

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# MOUSSE

## Exposed Surfaces

**Hugh Scott-Douglas**  
interviewed by Ruba Katrib

Pictorial and photographic processes join forces in the attempt to track down a new material tool. Contingencies that pervert methods of duplication, producing one-offs.



"A cashed cheque, a canceled stamp," installation view, Silverman Gallery, San Francisco, 2012. Courtesy: the artist and Silverman Gallery, San Francisco

**Ruba Katrib** *Can you describe the starting point for some of your works and how the process of physically creating them also informs them? For instance, in the "Cheque" series you've created a series of paintings that record the trace of an earlier painting.*

**Hugh Scott-Douglas** The primary impetus behind my most recent project started with an interest in the production of architectural blueprints. Architects favored Cyanotyping at the turn of the last century for its efficiency in creating multiples of their drawings. It's an early photographic process that creates direct impressions (the term "Cyanotype" refers to the cyan blue color of the copy). At the same time, I was interested in the notion of a promissory note and was looking for a plastic vessel that would communicate not an image, but the potential or possibility of an image, and the Cyanotype resonated with this. I developed a few bodies of Cyanotype-based works, before starting to consider their relationship to the UV light source that makes the imprint possible. I researched other outputs that used light as its primary catalyst and became attracted to laser cutting, as it uses an IR laser, a light source that falls on the opposite end of the spectrum as UV light. Using a digital algorithm, I was able to reorder the visual information used in the motifs found in the Cyanotype, and create an archive of previous works which could be activated to create these negative versions of previously shown Cyanotype works.

**RK** *You are merging some of the key material elements and processes of both painting and*

*photography in your work, how do you think these relationships are connected in art today?*

**HSD** I have a hard time discussing the relationship of my work to either painting or photography. I am aware of the overlap and clearly I'm drawing from their respective idioms, but for me, the project was never really motivated by an interest in either one. I studied sculpture in school, and for me, making work has always been more about establishing an appropriate material vessel that articulates the initial research. This is more important to me than undermining the formal constraints of any given medium.

**RK** *The index plays an important role in your work. In regards to the architectural Cyanotyping process that you use, it seems that you are more interested in suggesting a potentiality of presence than recording a process.*

**HSD** Definitely. Because each work ends up being recycled over and over again, and is stored in a digital archive, it allows for the potential to be realized repeatedly. For me, this also underscores the fact that each piece exists as part of a larger conceptual framework rather than as a concrete and fully matured object in itself. Because the material process is invariably contingent on the environment, each time the works are re-activated they end up being totally unique, even though they are produced from the same negative or vector file.

**RK** *In a recent exhibition at Silverman Gallery in San Francisco titled "A cashed cheque, a cancelled stamp," you showed a series of works*

*produced with vector files as well as works that were exposed to light without a negative. The title of the exhibition refers to a sort of elimination or nullification of the original through reproduction. By making unique works from a shared starting point, is there a form of negation that takes place?*

**HSD** "A cashed cheque, a cancelled stamp" developed out of a series of thoughts I was having about promissory notes and their expenditure. There is something interesting to me about the way in which these notes (cheques and stamps) are physically marked when spent so as to negate their value, whereas most other currencies are re-circulated. With the "Stamp" works in that show, I was working on a series of abstract Cyanotypes, which were essentially developed as chemigrams, rather than photograms. I laid out large sheets of the photosensitive linen in the sun in front of my studio and, as the works were actively exposing I treated them with a variety of different chemicals that affect and interfere with the process. The real interest here was in working on these while they were in flux, as eventually they lose the ability to develop further. There is a sort of finitude to this that seems to run counter-intuitive to the project of the painter that seemed appropriate.

**RK** *How do you view the relationship between nullification and potentiality? While your works reference histories of photography, film, painting and even sculpture, they seem to utilize the mold, pattern, or negative in order to suggest something more.*

**HSD** I think I am really most attracted to establishing specific binaries within the systems that present themselves to me as I am working. For example, the shift from stable and predictable outputs back to those rooted in more contingent situations. In this sort of self-affirming and self-effacing process, it helps to suggest a sort of vacancy to the works.

**RK** *The process of establishing binary systems in your work as well as a focus on vacancy suggest a limited frame of reference and a very specific economy of materials and actions. Are you looking at other realms that similarly share these conditions to inform the development of your work?*

**HSD** I like to think of my studio as closer to a film studio rather than a painter's, which tends to be romanticized. I definitely place a heavy importance on a type of material and manual frugality—and by this I mean that the distance between concept and material is always minimized and that allows for a very protean dimension to my practice. At the moment, I've been exploring different types of surfaces, including laminating multiple sheets of lighting gels onto aluminum panels. These culminate in slightly varied shades of black that are only really discernible as different when contextualized with other works from the same series. These works continue to establish and contradict themselves by constantly questioning their intended function. In this specific situation, the mirror acts as a camera, capturing its subject as it walks into the frame—but it also yields a strange type of picture plane that never quite comes into being.

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THE NEW YORKER

**GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN: "ART  
HUGH SCOTT-DOUGLAS"**

Vince Aletti,

January 26, 2012

For a show he calls "A Place in the Sun," Scott-Douglas rings the gallery with fourteen identically sized cyanotypes, printed on linen. The process is photographic—it involves the impression of sunlight filtered through negatives—but the effect is painterly. Feathery sky-blue passages intensify most frames in the center, but fade away at the edges, suggesting cinematic dissolves or the variations of intensity in a piece of music. Up close, however, each seemingly abstract image is revealed to be a fine net of overlaid checkerboard patterns, turning the installation into a seductively ethereal Op-art environment. Through Feb. 18.

Through February 18 Clifton Banavento 616 Broadway, at Spring St., New York, NY 212-431-6326 [cliftonbanavento.com](http://cliftonbanavento.com)