

[See It](#)[Report a p](#)

Pierre Dorion: Abstraction, Gymnastics and Memory

GALERIE RENÉ BLOUIN, MONTREAL JAN 24 TO FEB 28 2009



Pierre Dorion *Abstractions (Série C)* 2004–05

[Close Move](#)

The work of Montreal painter [Pierre Dorion](#) deals with overriding themes of loss and memory in the age of AIDS. Yet his paintings have also steadily engaged with the formal issues of contemporary painting—from flatness and colour to scale and surface texture. Given Dorion's succinctness as an image-maker, the result has been a body of work that perennially hovers at the edges of abstraction.

Dorion delivers a particular uncertainty about the status of the image that sews time into his paintings and gives them a dimension that generates a state of quiet release as one looks. A few years ago in Louise Déry's UQAM exhibition "[Are You Talking to Me? Conversation\(s\)](#)," Dorion showed his *Nuages gris* paintings in a loose wall grid. The small silvery blue canvases could have been monochromes, or mirrors for that mirror-themed show, but the porous boundaries of their possibilities accepted the closure of their title—grey clouds—which in itself served as a metaphor for their indeterminacy.



Pierre Dorion *Abstractions (Série A)* 2005–07

The new paintings in this show are all unequivocally “abstracts” in a vertical, striped format—but Dorion still plays a double game that undoes this categorical sureness with a lurking representational framework. You see it in the muted colours—the olives, violets, greys, pinks, blues and beiges that carry echoes of a descriptive function. The colour in these paintings registers as colour from elsewhere. It’s transposed colour where the net effect is to feel pictures behind pictures, the intermittent splicing of different fragments of vision.

In an email, gallery director [René Blouin](#) offers a summary of Dorion’s process: “These small paintings are often done at the end of the day with paint left over from the day’s session. Or sometimes they are some kind of morning gymnastic before the artist continues to work on his narrative paintings.” In other words, Dorion’s abstracts are true abstracts. They depend on external sources and retain an air of that dependency. But in rehearsing possibilities and honouring memory they have a seamless connection to the larger themes of his work. (372 Ste-Catherine St W #501, Montreal QC)

- www.galeriereblouin.com



“Pierre Dorion” 2009 Installation view

[Subscribe to Canadian Art today and save 30% off the newstand price.](#)

RELATED STORIES

Guido Molinari and Colour: Paintings 1954–1999

These days, it is hard to imagine hard-edge paintings causing much controversy in the contemporary art world. But history shows it can. Now, Montreal’s Galerie Simon Blais puts a Canadian twist on the legacy of abstract minimalism with a retrospective of the late Guido Molinari.

Misaki Kawai: Wilderness Wonderland

With her exuberant “Outdoor Club” show, the New York–based Japanese artist Misaki Kawai kick-starts a cold winter season in Toronto at Paul Bright, a new gallery in Toronto’s west-end Bloor Street art enclave near Lansdowne Avenue.

Andrew Morrow: Oh, Happy Meat

The Toronto-based painter Andrew Morrow makes some of the most complex figurative paintings in contemporary art. His immersion of viewers into media mayhem is sharp, topical and impressively well rendered.