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In Studio: Steve Driscoll

Landscape action painter has exhibit at Angell Gallery.



Painter Steve Driscoll in his west-end studio, complete with reflecting pool he installed as a "dry run" for his show at Angell Gallery, opening April 29. On right, "Shore," his eight-panel landscape that measures 9 feet tall by 40 feet long.

By: Murray Whyte Visual arts, Published on Sat Apr 23 2016

Steve Driscoll doesn't mind admitting it took a little convincing for his dealer, Jamie Angell, to agree to have his gallery flooded with three inches of inky black water. "That and a few beers," Driscoll laughs. As he does, he's pulling on boots to step into the same water in his studio, which he's filled up as a not-so dry run for his show there on April 29. You get the idea: as a landscape painter, Driscoll's not so married to romantic notions of plein-air impressionism so much as he is tuned to his very contemporary times. The pond, complete with boardwalk, acts as a reflecting pool for Driscoll's day-glo compositions. Despite their scale, Driscoll paints them in a single day (mostly; *Shore*, a 9-by-40-foot behemoth, seen here, took two). That's largely due to the fast-drying properties of his medium, a pigmented urethane that gives the work its artificial sheen. It helps place him in a genre of one: a landscape action painter. And working in the commercial advertising printing standard CMYK colour range, Driscoll brings landscape practice right up to the here and now. *Just a Sliver of the Room*, new paintings by Driscoll, opens at Angell Gallery April 29, 1444 Dupont St., Unit 15 (angellgallery.com).



This cart is in Driscoll's painting room, which is outfitted with a restaurant ventilation system to remove toxic gases from his materials. Working with pigmented urethane, Driscoll is essentially taming fast-drying liquid, meaning he has to paint with his panels laid flat, and quickly. His enormous eight-panel work was painted in two days.



"The Sky Was Beautiful on Fire," Driscoll's painting of northern lights, is doubled in the reflected pool he installed in his studio so he could accurately preview his upcoming show at Angell Gallery. The artist worked in construction before breaking through with his art full-time, making such projects undaunting.



A 9-by-13-foot two-panel piece, "Yard Up the Street," is up on the wall in Driscoll's studio. While it looks much like an electric-coloured Rorschach test, Driscoll, who began as an abstract painter, now paints only landscapes that he feels are "true to our times and the tools we have."