

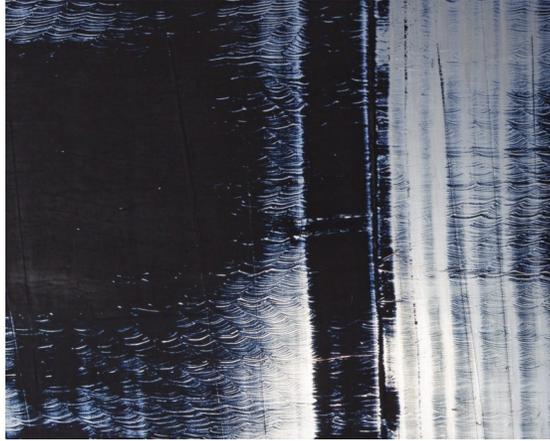
Daniel Hutchinson: Mirror, Mirror / Angell Gallery

The early twentieth century avant-garde sought to radically alter the subject matter and aesthetic preoccupations of art history past. Radicals such as Kandinsky, Malevich, the Delaunays and Kupka regularly rejected Western artistic tropes, forgoing perspectival compositions containing recognizable figures and natural phenomena in favour of geometric or pure abstraction. The picture plane was reduced and flattened to its inherent two-dimensionality, an artistic decision that influential critic and formalist Clement Greenberg enthusiastically argued for in the plastic arts. Subject matter became less literal and historical, allowing a platform for more philosophical and existential concerns to proliferate and take precedence. Content was harder to pin down, as purely abstract images and compositions denied any easy associations to the empirical world. This dismissal of tradition inevitably foreshadowed the cultural ubiquity of movements such as Abstract Expressionism and Minimalism, producing an expanded visual vocabulary that opened up the scope of art beyond mimesis and naturalism. *Daniel Hutchinson: Mirror, Mirror*, Angell Gallery's latest solo exhibition, finds the Hamiltonian artist continuing the iconoclastic lineage of early twentieth century painting both figuratively and literally throughout the selection of contemporaneously produced works.



Daniel Hutchinson, *Mirror, Mirror*, 2015, oil on canvas, 48" x 60". Image courtesy of Angell Gallery

The title piece within the exhibition sets up Hutchinson's pictorial intentions rather nicely. Rendered in a mostly monochromatic colour palette with subtle tonal highlights, the painting alludes to Malevich's "Black Square" of 1915, but is more visually dynamic in the subtle, undulating wave-like movement that is created on the canvas. Similarly, the "Day 1 (from the series, 16 Days at Sea, March 2013)" reduces the image of an aquatic landscape, and its sublime associations to a series of thin, indexical brushstrokes that abstractly recreate the impression and contours of the sea. Throughout the selection of paintings created within 2016, Hutchinson idiosyncratically embodies the subversive tendencies of his modern forebears. Floral decorative prints become invaded by a black abstract mass that destabilizes their particularly coherent pattern, brazenly downplaying the appearance of conventional representation within the exhibition.



Daniel Hutchinson, *Day 1* (from the series, *16 Days at Sea*, March 2013), 2015/2016, oil on rescue blanket, 8" x 10". Image courtesy of Angell Gallery



Daniel Hutchinson, *Hand Painted Pictures*, 2016, oil on canvas, 42" x 36". Image courtesy of Angell Gallery

Hutchinson provides an aesthetic and formal divergence from his earlier works with these new series of paintings. Gone are the fluorescent lights that were cleverly installed above and beneath his seemingly monochromatic canvases that revealed complex geometric patterns that appeared three-dimensional when illuminated. Instead, the artworks within *Mirror Mirror* appear as traditionally autonomous paintings, rather than an element within a complex and beautiful installation piece. Hutchinson's Flavianesque preoccupation with heightened opticality and synthetic luminosity is substituted for a more theoretically based analysis of painting and its iconoclastic tendencies. The artist goes to the root of early twentieth century concerns with traditional and proper decorum in his own unique manner, simultaneously referencing his subversive forebears while nuancing his own distinct presence within the plastic arts.



Daniel Hutchinson, *It Could Be You. It Could Be Me.*, 2015, oil on canvas, 48" x 60". Image courtesy of Angell Gallery

Aside from their aesthetic splendor and rigor, these paintings require a thorough and contemplative viewing experience. Hutchinson's work moves beyond easy categorization to embody an essence of painting, one that looks beyond customary art-historical practices to something less definable, and immediately beautiful.

David Saric

*Exhibition information: March 4 – April 2, 2016, Angell Gallery, 1444 Dupont St., Unit 15 (Entrance off Campbell Ave.). Gallery hours: Wed – Sat: 12 – 6 p.m.