

RICHARD ORIENT

# Hudson River Abstracted



1  
Hudson River #2,  
oil on paper, 15 x 20"

2  
Hudson River #6,  
oil on paper, 15 x 20"

3  
Hudson River #5,  
oil on paper, 15 x 20"

4  
Hudson River #7,  
oil on paper, 15 x 20"



Richard Orient began his painting life as an abstract painter when he was in school in the '70s. Abstraction was *de rigueur* in art schools at the time, but "I was game," he says. As he painted more, he found the works becoming more like landscapes.

His work swings easily from abstraction to the landscape and, eventually, back again.

His latest paintings are abstract landscapes of the Hudson River painted with a squeegee. They can be seen at George Billis Gallery in New York, December 11 through January 12, 2019.

"I'm comfortable doing landscapes," he says, "they're integral to my artistic expression. If I do a year or two of landscapes or if they begin to get too realistic, I say, 'Let's do abstraction.' I try to erase the imprint of realism."

Orient builds and throws ceramics in New York City and travels by train along the Hudson River to and from Poughkeepsie and his home in Dutchess County. The landscape along the Hudson is surprisingly bucolic and inspires him on his weekly journey.

The paintings in the exhibition are his impressions of moving through the landscape in different



seasons and weather conditions—the colors of the countryside change and the reflections on the river change with the weather. "It's fascinating to me," he explains. "I'm learning the river in a different way."

Applying paint with a squeegee could result in flat abstractions, but he incorporates his knowledge of creating atmosphere and depth gained through painting the landscape realistically to bring those qualities to his Hudson River paintings.

"Painting this way has a real spontaneous feeling to it," he explains. "There's a surprise quality. I can't predict what the squeegee dragging paint across the paper is going to do. The paint is viscous and goes down differently than with a brush. There's more texture. I can scrape it some more or leave the first drag of paint. I respond to it. I'm working from memory rather than from photographs. The smaller scale brings in a certain intimacy." ●

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