



“REDHEAD,” 2007, Tom Holland
EPOXY PAINT ON ALUMINUM, 83½" x 60"
PHOTO: COURTESY DAVID RICHARD CONTEMPORARY

SANTA FE

Tom Holland: “Paintings Past and Present” at David Richard Contemporary

Few galleries in Santa Fe match the strength of David Richard Contemporary's exhibitions as consistently, and “Tom Holland: Paintings Past and Present” is no exception. David Richard knows the strength of an art exhibit is in visual presentation. Holland, an unconventional painter, largely due to his choice of painting surfaces, is a bold anti-minimalist. Beyond the largely non-objective painting style itself, the constructs he builds change the vernacular of Abstract Expressionism. In the mid-1960s, when Holland began breaking out of that mold, perhaps the time was right for a move away from the traditional canvas.

The scope of the exhibition is, as always, ambitious, especially in light of its short run, covering a span of 40 years in Holland's career. Throughout that time, Holland, an accomplished painter with a great eye for compelling compositions, moved from canvas to aluminum to fiberglass surfaces but the results never seem like painted sculpture. Even his *Untitled (Lizard)* from 1963 retains the spirit of a painting, meant to hang on an interior wall. David Richard positions it as a centerpiece of the exhibition. In a way, it epitomizes Holland's work. The surface itself is representational but the painting, less so. More

recent paintings hark back to modernist abstractions, like those of Andrew Dasburg. The protruding elements of these works, made within the past decade, rise off the flat fiberglass planes but not always in such dramatic fashion as in *Lizard. Span*, from 2002, is a good example: the dialogue between the flat plane and three-dimensional components is subtle and consistent. This isn't painting with collage, although there is a sense of assemblage on a large scale. The materials Holland paints on are as integral to the works' appearance as color, form, composition and other painterly considerations. One cannot say the same of the traditional canvas.

The result is that the viewer gets an opportunity to trace a history through what is presented, as Holland transitions through several bodies of work. David Richard mounts exhibits that place artists in a historical contexts and pairs them with contemporary work that reflect, directly or indirectly, the spread of a movement or an artist's influence or legacy. That's a feather in their cap. This is a hard-working gallery that doesn't trade on a name. Rather, it's all about the art.

—MICHAEL ABATEMARCO