

ART

SPOTLIGHT: HALLAR GALLERY

Robin Zmuda, former director of the recently closed Jayne Gallery, has decided to open her own gallery in Jayne's 4540 Main St. space. Helping out will be her parents, Jim and Barbara Hallar, and husband, Mike Zmuda. The new

Hallar Gallery will represent many former Jayne Gallery artists, including Philomene Bennett, Jane Booth, Josh George, Henry Isaacs, Dean Kube, Lou Marak and Allen Wynn. The gallery will have a grand opening "Artist Party" from 6 to 9

tonight and present its inaugural exhibit, a group show of gallery artists. For more information call (816) 561-5339 or visit hallargallery.com.

— Alice Thorson/The Star



CHEMICAL ATTRACTION

Painter challenges with energetic, abstract oil works

By ALICE THORSON
The Kansas City Star

Kansas City abstractionist Eric Sall's second one-person exhibit at Joseph Nease Gallery bursts with energy and experimentation.

In an art world where many artists have forsaken oil paint for non-art materials, this 26-year-old painter puts the medium through its paces. He daubs, he drags, he drips and streaks. He piles up gestural swipes into inchoate masses and makes them duke it out with crisp, hard-edged forms.

He also plays with the chemistry of paint, diluting it with turpentine to produce thin washes, mixing it with water to create lively mottled surfaces.

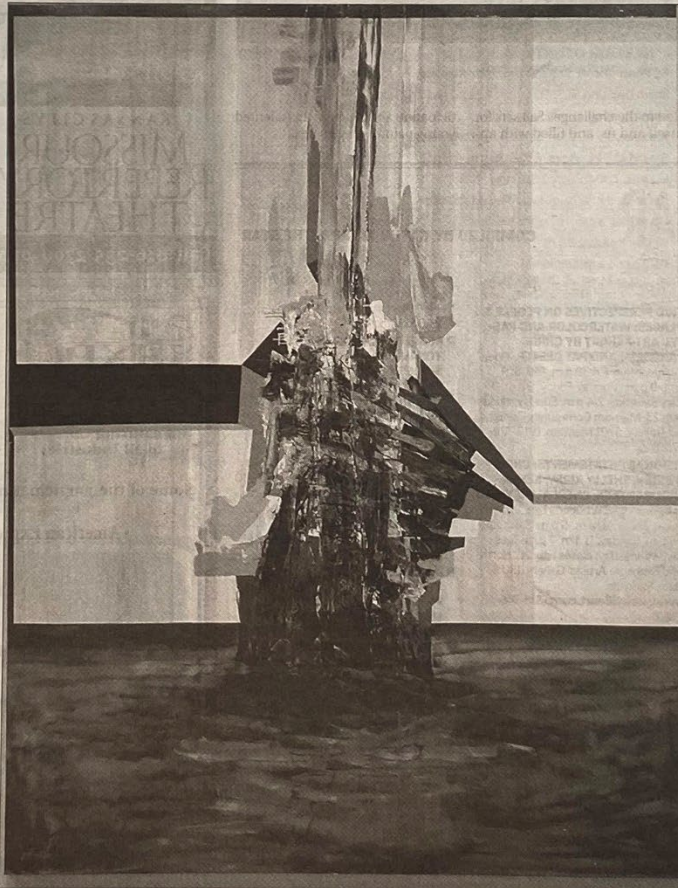
Sall won a Charlotte Street Fund award in 2001 and is currently in the middle of a 12-month residency at the Roswell Artist in Residence program in Roswell, N.M. He has worked his heart out for this show.

The exhibit comprises seven paintings on paper and 23 works on canvas — all but one completed in 2002.

Displayed in the front gallery, most of the oils on paper measure a modest 25-by-20 inches and feature iconic compositions of abstract shapes executed in a subdued palette of grayed tones. These key off the pastel tones of the found paper that Sall employs in these works, some from old Gap clothing store posters.

The paintings on paper are the most restrained works in this show. Much like a kid with a coloring book who keeps his scribbles inside the lines, Sall's painterly actions respect the contours of his invented shapes.

This changes when he works on larger sheets. The torquing purple form that forms the focal point of "Dr. Geek," one of two large works



Eric Sall's "Medicated Goo" is part of his exhibit "Something Amidst Nothing."

Courtesy of Joseph Nease Gallery

on paper in this group, anticipates the high painterly drama of the oils on canvas in the main gallery.

A major attraction of these can-

vases is their dynamic interplay of spontaneity and deliberation, the result of Sall's continual balancing of gestural passages and solid-color hard-edged forms, atmos-

pheric fields of color and strong architectural divisions of space.

In the towering 10-foot "Medicated Goo," for instance, broad tracks of paint zoom down from

THE SHOW

"Eric Sall: Something Amidst Nothing" continues at the Joseph Nease Gallery, 1819 Central, through Feb. 15. Hours are noon to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday and by appointment. Call (816) 421-2166 for information.

the top to mid-canvas, where they partake in a congestion of scrapings and strokes laid over a tippy edifice of slanted colored bands in an array of colors. A black horizontal band anchors this central "image" to the left-hand side of the canvas.

The field on which all this occurs consists of a blocky zone of streaky pink beside a vertical band of white. These abut a watery zone of inky blue covering the bottom third of the canvas.

The effect is one of the prow of a ship cutting through water, and Sall encourages such equations with familiar images. Drawing a comparison with the way people interpret Rorschach ink blots, he has titled his show, "Something Amidst Nothing."

In "Medicated Goo" and in several other paintings, Sall draws our attention to the edge of the canvas by painting a strip of contrasting color along parts of the perimeter. Each strip begins in a corner but does not necessarily continue along the entire edge of the work.

The unpredictability of this device keeps the viewer on his toes. It is perhaps most pronounced in "You Beautiful Bastard," in which the strip of bright blue that travels along the left-hand edge and turns the corner to continue along the bottom inexplicably peters out about halfway across the lower edge.

This is a compelling canvas, with its animated black gestural mass occupying the center of a streaky coppery background daubed with the occasional lozenge of red.

Sall's painterly bag of tricks seems bottomless. In "The Essence of Effervescence," a set of hard-edged vertical shapes

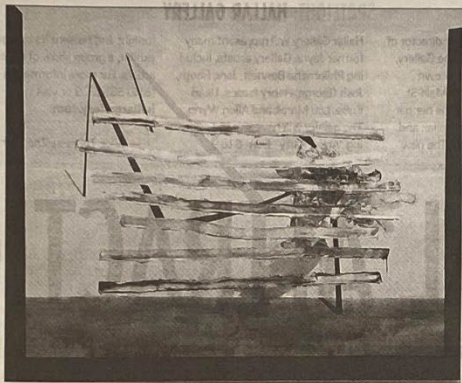
...march rhythmically across a mottled brown and gray ground above a cluster of abutting triangles and quadrilateral shapes that contribute a sense of circular motion to the composition.

A similarly composed node of abutting triangles appears in the center of "Cutout Knockout," in which white-painted star bursts strewn across a multicolored expressionist field create negative spaces.

In "Western Southwestern," Sall plays with illusionistic space and references to landscape; in "Phantom Filament," a scribbly line meanders below the translucent surface of a large angular white shape that fills most of the composition.

Throughout this exhibit, Sall alludes to the artists, strategies and ideas of abstraction's past, yet they never get the upper hand of his own highly individualistic painterly will.

Despite their considerable visual pleasures, these paintings are less about pleasing than stimulating—an aim they accomplish with aplomb: One leaves this show ad-



Eric Sall's 'Western Southwestern'

Courtesy of Joseph Nease Gallery

dicted to the challenges Sall sets for himself and us, and filled with anticipation about where this talented young painter may go next.

ART CALENDAR

COMPILED BY CATHY IBARRA/THE STAR

- OPENING RECEPTIONS**
- **GEOMETRIC ILLUSTRATIONS** BY RICHARD I. ... artists reception, a.m.-7 p.m. McKim, Friday, c/o Gallery, 7700 I. lge. (913-383-3333)
 - **MASQUE: PHANTOM FILAMENT** BY F. ... Gallery, 5; noon-5 p.m. 22. Greenleafs university, www.sandletters.com (913-383-3333)
 - **AFFINITIES... PHOTOGRAPHY** BY J. ... opening reception, 6-8 p.m. J. Monday-Friday, closes March 2 at Kansas City, www.kcal.edu
 - **ANNUAL BENEVOLENT PREVIEW EXHIBITION** 11 a.m.-5 p.m. V. closes Feb. 21. Coalition Bldg (816-421-5222)
 - **ARTWORK BY** ... Opens Feb. 3; 9 a.m. Monday-Friday, 1-5 p.m. Su. Kansas City, Kar Wyandotte Brar 551-3280)
 - **KU DEPARTMENT OF DESIGN GRADUATING STUDENT GROUP EXHIBITION**: Open 1:30 p.m. Friday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Wednesday, 8:30 a.m.-9 p.m. Thursday, closes Feb. 7. KU Art and Design Gallery, third floor, Art and Design Building, KU Campus, Lawrence. Free. (785-864-4401)
 - **FERNANDO ORELLANA AND LINDA SACKIN: NEW WORK AND LINDA SACKIN: A GROUP SHOW**: Opening artists reception, 1-6 p.m. Feb. 1, 1-5 p.m. Saturday, Sunday and by appoint-

- ment; closes March 2. The Late Show, 4222 Charlotte. (816-531-8044)
- **TWO PERSPECTIVES ON PEOPLE & PLACES: WATERCOLOR AND PASTEL ART EXHIBIT BY CHRIS LANGSETH AND PAT DEETER**: Opening reception 7-8:30 p.m. Feb. 6; 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Friday; 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, 2-4 p.m. Sunday; closes Feb. 23. Merriam Community Center Art Gallery, 5701 Merriam. (913-722-7750)
- **VISIONARY STATEMENTS: CHRIS O'BRIEN, SHELLY KIRBY, KEN DELADURANTAYE, CHERI ALFREY AND THERESA CREW**: Opens Feb. 2; noon-8 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, 1-5 p.m. Sunday, 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Tuesday-Wednesday; closes Feb. 28. Northland Exposure Artists' Gallery, 130 S. Main, Parkville. www.parkvilleart.com (816-746-6300)
- **JEWELRY SHOW: STEVE COX, APRIL MORGAN, SANTA MURPHY, BRAD EGGER, LIZ EGGER, MICHELE GERLING AND SANDRA DAVIDSON**: Artists demonstrate techniques on-site. Noon-7 p.m. Feb. 1. River Gallery, 207 A Delaware, Leavenworth. Free. www.firstcityart.com (913-682-7444)
- **PHOTOGRAPHS BY BILLY ENGLEHART**: Opening reception with artist, 1-3 p.m. Feb. 2; 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Sunday; closes Feb. 28. Unitarian Church, All Souls Unitarian-Universalist Church, 4501 Walnut. (816-531-2131)
- **CLASSIC MOVIE POSTERS**: Opens Feb. 2; 7:30 a.m.-11 p.m. Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, 9 a.m.-8 p.m. Sunday; closes March 2. Westport Coffeehouse, 4010 Pennsylvania. (816-756-3221)
- **A LIGHT IN THE OTHER ROOM: FIRST LIGHT: FEATURING WORKS BY COLLECTIVE OF KC-BASED AFRICAN AMERICAN ARTISTS**: 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, noon-6 p.m. Sunday; closes March 2. Changing Gallery, American Jazz Museum, 1616 E. 18th. (816-474-8463)
- **ROBIN BERNAT: AMERICAN PASTORAL** (closes April 6) and **DO-HO-SUH: PERFECT HOME** (closes March 2): 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Friday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday. Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, 4420 Warwick. Free. (816-753-5784)
- **ART OF THE LEGA: MEANING AND METAPHOR IN CENTRAL AFRICA**: 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, noon-5 p.m. Sunday; closes May 4. Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 4525 Oak. (816-561-4000)
- **INNOVATION/IMAGINATION: 50 YEARS OF POLAROID PHOTOGRAPHY** (closes March 16), **SPENCER MUSEUM OF ART CELEBRATES 25 YEARS** (closes March 30), and **HIDDEN JAPAN: PHOTOGRAPHS BY KI-JURO YAHAGI, CIRCULATED BY THE JAPAN FOUNDATION** (closes Feb. 16): 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Thursday, noon-5 p.m. Sunday. Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, Lawrence. www.ku.edu/~sma (785-864-4710)
- **TWENTY HAND-PICKED PEDAL TRACTORS FROM TRACTOR DON HRABIK'S FINE COLLECTION**: 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday, 1-4 p.m. Sunday; closes April 26. Toy and Miniature Museum, 5235 Oak. \$2-\$4. www.umke.edu/tmm (816-333-2055)
- **THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY: A GLORIOUS BURDEN**: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Thursday, noon-5 p.m. Sunday; closes May 11. Truman Presidential Museum and Library, U.S. 24 and Delaware, Independence. \$3-\$5. www.trumanlibrary.org; http://americanhistory.si.edu/presidency (816-833-1225)

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