

Raphaëlle Goethals

Holly Johnson Gallery, Dallas, Texas - Continuing through March 26, 2016

Recommendation by John Zotos



Sky's Falling, 2015, wax, resin and pigments on birch panel, 70 x 60"

In her current show, titled "Echoes," Belgian native Raphaëlle Goethals presents her lush abstract paintings of encaustic resin and earth pigments. Densely layered and time consuming, this type of painting can be aesthetically realized only by the artist leaving behind narrative subject matter. Goethals allows the material to reflect her interaction with the space and the extraordinary light conditions of New Mexico, where she now resides. The artist has worked along these lines for almost twenty years, perfecting an arduous technical process that gives her paintings a visible depth that reveals bright color and texture on the surface, while creating sustaining tension beneath that sustains our attention.

The dominant hue in all of the pieces is a milky white that somewhat resembles a cloudy sky. These areas on the surface interact and reveal, in varying degrees, the color traces that seem to float or erupt through the atmosphere. Goethals utilizes this to great effect, employing blues and reds that show themselves at the edges, concentrating her color areas in different aggregations. Sometimes they are more prominent at the top, and at others all over the surface. The handling of the encaustic and pigment is free and lyrical, suggestive of natural forms in space. Goethals counters this with small circles or dots of color that seem to come closest to the viewer's space. They form a rigid pattern in some of the paintings and are random in others. They provide a contrasting mechanical and vaguely geometric structure, forming points that interact with both the picture plane and the perimeter of the canvas. Indeed, they accentuate and make that much more compelling the already richly layered abstraction.