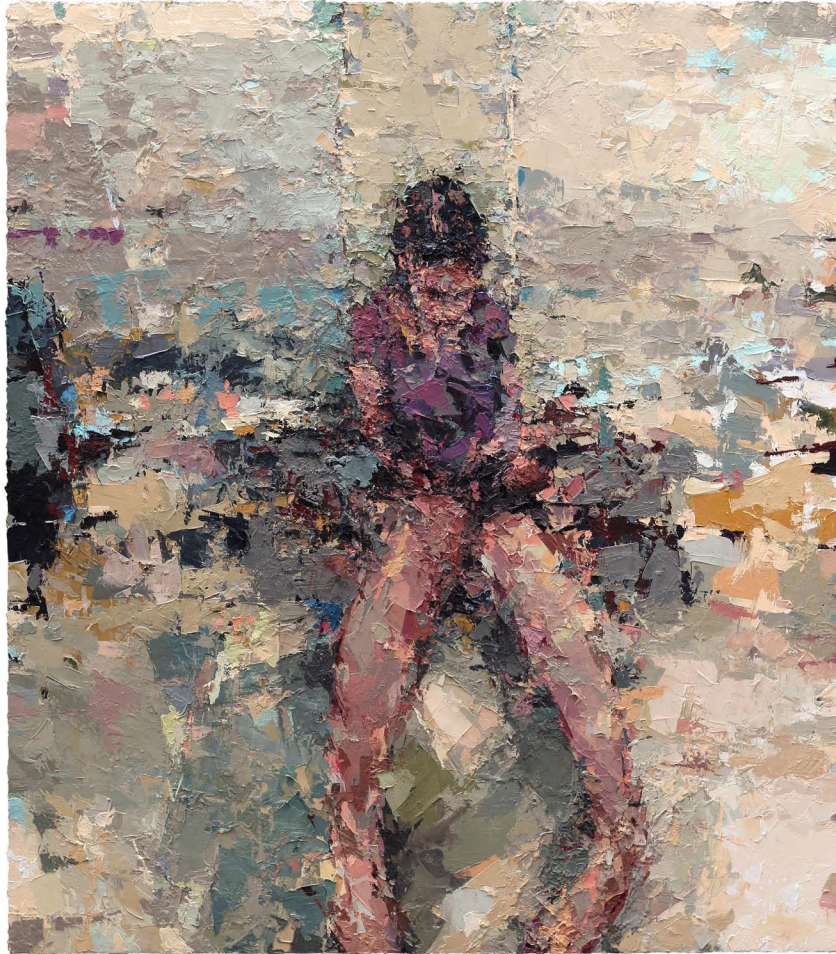


The Boston Globe

GALLERIES | CATE MCQUAID



Drawn in

New galleries continue to pop up like spring dandelions in the SoWa district. Matter & Light Fine Art's first show spotlights Cambridge painter Joshua Meyer, who exhibits in Provincetown and San Francisco, but is a newcomer to the Boston gallery scene.

His portraits, largely made with a palette knife, coalesce out of jittery patchworks of color, as if the space around each sitter — indeed, the space between the sitter and the artist — bristles with a push-pull energy. We're drawn toward the figure, we want to learn more, yet we must — initially, at first — fight to get there.

Then, as in "Ligaments," there's a tipping point; we've made it through the shimmers and shards, and we're suddenly drawn to the center, where a girl sits, legs stretched in front of her, head bowed. Perhaps she's reading, or focused on an electronic device.

Here, Meyer's paint handling grows delicate, although you still see the facture. It's quietest in the center of the

JOSHUA MEYER: Towards

At Matter & Light Fine Art,
450 Harrison Ave., through April 30.
978-807-8651,
www.matterlightfineart.com

canvas, where the girl's plum shirt is a place to rest. But her face, her eyes are constructions of built-up paint. As with all Meyer's paintings, you have to step back to see the picture; close-up, you're in the thick of its making.

These works ask: Can we truly see anyone close-up? They aren't so much portraits as they are depictions of intimacy: We think we know our loved ones, but do we?

Cate McQuaid can be reached at catemcquaid@gmail.com. Follow her on Twitter @cmcq.