

Richard Galling *Popular Emotion* is now up at The Green Gallery. This, Galling's fifth solo exhibition at the gallery, is the latest iteration of a 14 year relationship with us. As an artist-run institution, Galling has also been a crucial member of our gallery's operations team for the past two and a half years. We're thrilled to present his latest paintings, now through March 31st. We hope you are able to join us for an opening reception this Saturday March 1st, from 5-7pm. The Gallery will also be open for public preview this Friday and Saturday from 1-5pm.

How can I claim to speak of Richard Galling's newest paintings? – Neither in praise nor in pursuit of some elusive truth. Just as with the double moment of the dream, in that it is lived and that it is told, I'll speak in the distinction between seeing these paintings, that is experiencing them, and experiencing their want, and their want to unground their want, and speaking of them.

Their forms, gestures, fragile layerings of color, phlox and aster dissolve into themselves, answering no one. There is no bearing to their witness. To describe Galling's work is to speak only of what, in them, is near—never the vastness asserting itself within this nearness, a vastness vanishing the moment its presence *is*. A surface where light might remain, all we contact is the slow erosion of form, the way each stroke undoes itself in the act of appearing.

Galling's is a struggle. To hold onto what withdraws in a painting, to summon it through obliquity, to shape it into something like a map—a model of what it would be, and of what it would be like, to stand watch over the disappearance, to resist the impulse to contain. The flower in its unflowering. They undo themselves, so to stand in place of what they themselves cannot be. And it's in that way that they come to speak, through their incompleteness.

A surface where light might remain. But all we're given is the slow erosion of form, the way each stroke undoes itself in the act of appearing. The absence left behind offers a tinge of the unbearable. Yet, it is the only fidelity we can offer: to stand watch over this disappearance, to resist the impulse to contain it. Or, even to want more from it. These paintings ask—they stutter, they move like yesterday was felt—they ask us to look, but they don't quite *show*. They ask to be seen, without simplifying or explaining, in their disintegration.

These thin, fleeting landscapes offer no grounding, in their garner of a sense of movement. The way they move is steadily; and only in one mode: slight. Their restless, open field, unfolds. Heather and gorse stretching without direction, without end, walking without path and also without weary.

A Dream of Want

Overtaken by a sense of exposure, I'm made bare to the world. For a moment, I'm more alive in my nakedness, feeling every glance of grass, every stone smooth, refracting light, as if discovering the body's potentialities. It's not the return of something lost (not, say, like an image of a root, of a cave's threshold, or of hearth) but the brief suspension of knowing (like the water of dew, or the solidity of pearl). And then it doesn't return, my immersion before the landscape withdraws again.

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The paintings that Galling offers do not offer themselves to be grasped. They do not appear *for* us, but instead manifest their own fragile being, their own trembling between hesitance and insistence on existing at all. And in them, color is not an affective choice (or at least, if it is, it is not only that, or even primarily that) but is itself transmigrated as gesture. It is in this gesture their map is drawn.

I fear losing my way in them, though I never truly experience being lost. And though I find myself repeatedly returning to the same place, it's never by my having retraced my steps. The painting withdraws, yet remains in view. It undoes itself, yet refuses to disappear. It's this undoing, this map, that calls to me—to an attention that is not possession, to a silence that does not attempt to preserve.

SJ Cowan