

ARTnews

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Eric Aho

DC Moore

"Covert," the title of Eric Aho's vibrant exhibition (and of two paintings in it), referred to shelter, among other things. But more significantly, it alluded to that which is hidden, ulterior, such as references to art history, to Romanticism and the sublime, to a Goya drawing that is the inspiration for the "Covert" series, and to the divide forced by modernism between the abstract and the representational, formalism and narrative, materiality and illusion. Aho demolishes these boundaries. Flurries of brushstrokes, at once suave and rough, emphatic and less so, whirl throughout his work with glides and swoops, pausing here and there, like perfect little storms of art and nature. While the paintings evoke landscapes—the mark-making coalesces to reveal what might be vistas of dark woods or snowy slopes, streams, branches, and trees, an impression reinforced by such titles as *French Wood*, *Alpiniste*, and *English Scenery* (all 2011)—they also unravel into tangles of pure color, light, movement, and material. And how do you read the swath of white pigment in the "Covert" paintings (both 2011)—as a void, an erasure, or simply paint?

There was an insistence here on oil and linen—the classics of painting—and the cascades of different hues created a range of moods, as in *Chute*, a landslide of white, and *Nocturne*, a study in blues, deep greens, and tinged blacks (both 2011). A sophisticated colorist, Aho is also a wizard with light and movement, and this comprehensive presentation of recent work that was as much about painting as about panorama showed him at his best.

—Lilly Wei



Eric Aho, *Nocturne*, 2011, oil on linen, 36" x 30".
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