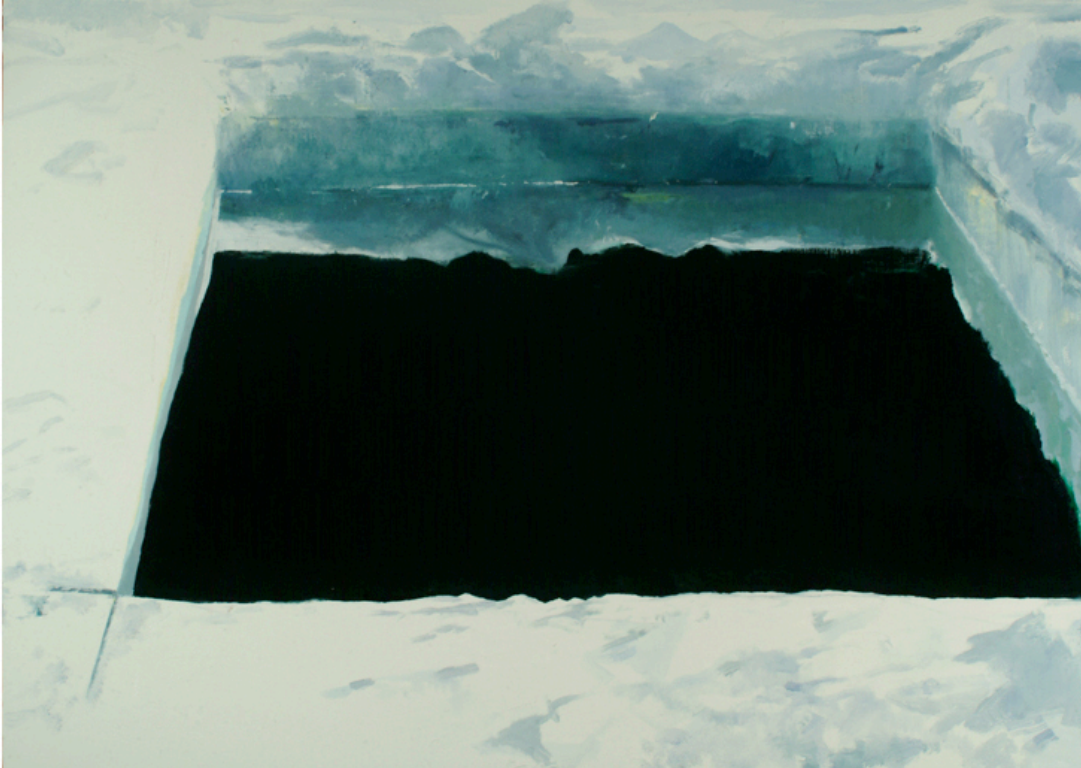## First Presentation of Eric Aho's Work at DC Moore Gallery

Friday, October 16, 2009

Eric Aho, Ice Cut (1930), 2008. Oil on linen, 50 x 70 in. Photo: Courtesy DC Moore Gallery.

NEW YORK, NY.- DC Moore Gallery presents "Eric Aho: Red Winter," the first presentation of the artist's work at the gallery.

Eric Aho explores extreme conditions of nature in landscape paintings that incorporate traditional representation, gestural abstraction, and implied figuration. The subjects of Aho's recent paintings—ice floes, forest fires, and snowstorms— recall the immediacy and monumentality of nature. In them, he makes palpable the physicality of mass and texture while directing us to the more intangible qualities of light, movement, and time.

Evoking tectonic sensation on a scale and with a painterly vigor appropriate to the wildernesses depicted, Aho conjures the density and friction of layers of ice, the bracing temperature of arctic water, and the beauty and destructive force of wildfire. In the catalogue accompanying the exhibition, author Bonnie Costello elaborates, "The dynamism of these paintings aligns with their subject matter. Instead of offering abiding geological forms, as a stable theater for variations of light and season, Aho places us deep inside extreme, protean states—in a reality not just leafing and shedding, but burning and freezing." As representation dissolves into abstraction, these works simultaneously evoke grandeur and moments of intimacy. Aho explains, "I respond to extremes and the tension between clarity and indistinctness, the literal and the suggested, between the knowable and the unknowable. I am curious about the line we are unable to cross

either physically, intellectually, or imaginatively."

Aho is influenced by the history of painting in surprising ways. His work bridges diverse associations ranging from Courbet to deKooning to Turrell. Costello reveals, "The boreal fires that consume the canvas have an all-over quality that can make one think of Jackson Pollock, but they first burned into Aho's imagination from a painting by Rembrandt, Rest on the Flight into Egypt (1647), where a tiny camp fire illuminates a circle around the figures who hover in a dark, expansive wilderness."

In earlier work, Aho focused on the landscape of his northern New England surroundings. His current process is a significant departure. Now, personal anecdote, memory, and invention are deliberately introduced into the content and meaning drawn from firsthand experience of the observable landscape. Intervening between the seen and the imagined, Aho explores "how a single painted image can mediate an equivalent level of tension and sensation present in an individual's relationship to the physical world." In her essay, Costello concludes, "With Aho, we confront reality not selectively, in discrete, familiar parts, or classical unities, but as sensation, in real time.... Consciousness is in a forest, finding its way, all smear and blur and shimmer. Perception is still happening in the viewing, which demands duration, for the painting is not just the afterimage of an event; it is the event."

Following studies at the Central School of Art and Design in London, Aho received his BFA from the Massachusetts College of Art. In 1989 he participated in the first exchange of scholars in over thirty years between the U.S. and Cuba. His postgraduate work was completed at the Institute of Art and Design in Lahti, Finland supported by a Fulbright Fellowship and a grant from the American Scandinavian Foundation.

Aho's paintings have been shown internationally in Ireland, South Africa, Cuba, Norway, and Finland. Recent exhibitions in the United States include: Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, Connecticut; Hood Museum of Art, Hanover, New Hampshire; Portland Art Museum, Maine; Ogunquit Museum of American Art, Maine; National Academy, New York; and American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York. Eric Aho lives and works in Saxtons River, Vermont.

DC Moore Gallery | Eric Aho | Bonnie Costello |