

ERIC AHO:
INFLECTION POINT

January 5 – February 4, 2017

Opening Reception:
Thursday, January 12, 6-8 pm



Base, 2010. Oil on linen, 62 x 80 in.

DC Moore Gallery is pleased to present *Inflection Point*, an exhibition of two ongoing bodies of work by Eric Aho, spanning the years 2000 to 2016. On view together for the first time, Aho's *Ice Cut* and *Mountains* series explore the tensions between history, memory, and concepts of beauty through the artist's luminous depictions of winter. Aho's fascination with the season and the ephemeral qualities of its two primary elements—snow and ice—has been a central preoccupation of the artist for more than twenty years. Together the series investigate the contrasting extremes between interior and exterior worlds, both psychological and physical—their simultaneous moments of rupture and confluence.

The *Ice Cut* series takes *avantos* as their subject matter. An *avanto* is a traditional Finnish hole cut into the surface of a frozen lake, through which one is meant to plunge after the intense heat of a sauna. The artist himself has been cutting *avantos* and then painting their dark recesses and uneven, iridescent contours each winter for the past decade.

These large-scale images are also rooted in a personal history. Aho's indelible impressions of his father recounting days spent harvesting ice as a young boy during the Depression are underscored in the paintings' parenthetical titles (1929, 1930, etc.). At the same time, these years are meant to coincidentally evoke the Modernist era, when figuration gave way to abstraction, and during which, in the artist's words, "similar shapes were also becoming liberated from their sources in nature."

To much acclaim, in early 2016, the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth presented an exhibition of the *Ice Cut* series, offering the unique opportunity to trace the series development over the past decade. Art critic Sebastian Smee of the Boston Globe highlighted the show in his year-end review of art exhibitions, praising Aho's "plunge pools cut out of ice" as "fresh, bold, subtle, and urgent."

Aho's fascination with winter terrains is manifested once more in his striking *Mountains* series, which hovers between abstraction and representation. White expanses of impastoed paint render sweeping peaks of snow and jagged shards of ice, testifying to the monumentality of nature, while reaching upwards and outwards beyond the canvas. As with the *Ice Cut* series the *Mountains* operate on two registers— those inflection points that the artist refers to as “the extremes of contrast embodied in open shapes and expanses of white—those strange interstices where naturalism and the unreal cleave to one another.”

In 2016 Eric Aho's work was on view at the New Britain Museum of American Art, CT, in *Eric Aho: An Unfinished Point in a Vast Surrounding* and in *Eric Aho: Ice Cuts* at the Hood Museum of Art, Hanover, NH. Recent shows of his painting include *Eric Aho: In the Landscape at the Federal Reserve Board*, Washington, DC (2013) and *Transcending Nature: Paintings by Eric Aho* at the Currier Museum of Art, Manchester, NH (2012). His work is included in the permanent collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, CA; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; National Academy Museum, New York; Hood Museum of Art, Hanover, NH; New Britain Museum of American Art, CT; and the Currier Museum of Art, Manchester, NH, among many others. Aho's work has been shown internationally in Ireland, South Africa, Cuba, Norway, and Finland. He was elected Academician of the National Academy in 2009. Aho lives and works in Saxtons River, Vermont.

A fully illustrated catalogue with an essay by the artist will accompany the show.



Ice Cut (1934), 2011-14. Oil on linen, 62 x 80 in.

DC MOORE GALLERY specializes in contemporary and twentieth-century art. The gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 am to 6 pm. For more information, for photographs, or to arrange a viewing, please call 212-247-2111 or email Rachel Johnson at rjohnson@dcmooregallery.com.