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In Daniel Hesidence's Paintings at Canada Gallery, Monochromes and Mystery

By **ROBERTA SMITH** DEC. 24, 2015

Daniel Hesidence's paintings have always covered a lot of bases, veering between the modernist and primordial in slippery ways. He's fascinated by the physicality of paint, often devising new ways of handling it for each series. But he also seems equally keen on works that inspire multiple associations with the world, if not always the immediate one. He has rarely made a painting that doesn't evoke something ancient or phantasmagoric. Some of his earlier series featured faces or animals, but even these emerge from strange swirls and sharp little shards of paint.

Mr. Hesidence's current "Summers Gun" completes four groups of canvases that, as he was doing them, evolved into homages to the seasons. Earlier paintings from "Summers Gun" were exhibited at the Journal Gallery in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, in 2014; the preceding series were "Rose Laughter Winter Holiday," "Autumn Buffalo" and "Maritime Spring," seen at the Venice Biennale in 2013.

The surface in this series is a rough, splotchy one, slightly off-putting, and apparently achieved by applying small amounts of paint with the end of a dry brush to form pointillist tufts of color. Layering tones of pink, yellow and black, usually with green and blues dominating, he creates a kind of antediluvian murk, at once silty and atmospheric. That the general tone can evoke oxidized copper or bronze adds to the antique mood.

White outlines of odd shapes crisscross at various depths among the layers of paint. They suggest cave paintings and also excavations seen from above, but whether of ancient cities or weapons (some are gunlike) is unclear. All we really know is that everything is at once mysterious, in perpetual flux in time and space, and yet highly specific. The paintings are also just eccentrically made monochromes that harbor signs of constant drawing and redrawing. Oddly, Mr. Hesidence's work connects to that of older painters like Joe Zucker and Ralph Humphrey, whose efforts are even more physically eccentric. Like them, he is highly focused on paintings as objects, but doesn't think it requires shutting all else out.

Daniel Hesidence

'Summers Gun'

Canada

333 Broome Street, Lower East Side

Through Jan. 6

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