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'Big and Small' paints a wide swath of expressive abstraction

Denzil Hurley is burying the smudged black dots that long have populated his paintings, plowing them into fields of gold. In "Scrib 2," the buried dots are pulse points in a light-struck field of broken horizontal lines.

His paintings are lovely yet lean, undemonstrative yet substantial.

Lovely is not the word that comes to mind when looking at Lauri Chambers' abstractions, also on view at the Francine Seders Gallery in an exhibit of abstract oil paintings titled "Big and Small."

Chambers' abstraction is tough minded, urban and resilient. Hurley's paintings would be at home in summer houses and mountain retreats, while Chambers' were raised on city grit. Her scraped-down darks and soiled whites mass themselves in cubby-hole spaces and hang on as if threatened with eviction.

If Hurley and Chambers represent the opposite ends of expressive abstraction, Robert C. Jones occupies its vital center. "Cragg's Mill," roughly 6 feet tall by 12 1/2 feet wide, features a harsh black post aspiring, through a blizzard of blue, to be a cross, possibly the frame for a window.

Whatever pattern Jones establishes, whatever vaguely representational form, his lavishly colored air undermines it and takes over. His work has muscle and grace, blunt force and bright beauty.