

PATRICK MIKHAIL GALLERY

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**PATRICK MIKHAIL GALLERY presents WHY I AM NOT A
PAINTER, a solo exhibition by Montreal artist WIL MURRAY**

November 19 to December 16, 2008

Artist Reception:

Friday, November 21, 2008
5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

NOVEMBER 19, 2008...PATRICK MIKHAIL GALLERY is pleased to present WHY I AM NOT A PAINTER, a solo exhibition of new works by Montreal artist WIL MURRAY.

Mr. Murray is the Eastern Canada Winner and National Semi-Finalist in the 2008 RBC Canadian Painting Competition. His work was most recently seen in an exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada featuring the work of all 16 RBC finalists. He will also be featured in the much-anticipated exhibition MAGENTA CARTE BLANCHE, VOL. 2, PAINTING, at Toronto's Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art (MOCCA). The exhibition opens November 15, 2008, and features 30 of Canada's best emerging, mid-career, and established painters

In WHY I AM NOT A PAINTER, Mr. Murray presents paintings inspired by, and dedicated to, noted American poet Frank O'Hara. As a playwright, art critic, Museum of Modern Art curator, and member of the so-called "New York School." Mr. O'Hara was closely associated with the Abstract Expressionism of the 1950s. His poems—seemingly improvisational, usually conversational and casual in tone—challenged the predominant "neo-Symbolist" poetry of the time. Considered by critics to be one of O'Hara's greatest, his 1957 poem "Why I am not a painter" reflects upon the creative process, challenging the status-quo, and the humor and levity that can be found therein. It is within this context that Mr. Murray presents his most recent body of work.

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The joyful exuberance of Mr. Murray's Pop art-influenced color palette stops viewers in their tracks, insisting they take notice. The layers of paint are legion, painstakingly poured on to the support, cut away in certain sections and reapplied elsewhere, creating a composition that seems cacophonous upon first look. The glossy finish of the paint intensifies this seeming chaos, causing the eyes to search for a stable point of reference. After the initial shock has passed, the complexity of the work, the ways in which it is simultaneously familiar and peculiar, begins to register.

His generous and complex works take their place within the resurgence of painting as a medium of relevance in contemporary art. Mr. Murray, however, pursues a non-representational practice that catechizes the history of modern painting in a playful manner, picking up dropped threads and taking them in new and daring directions. The manner in which he builds up specific areas of the surface while excavating others represents a daring embrace of, and challenge to, the two-dimensional nature of the support, creating a sculptural quality without producing illusionistic depth. Connected to formal technique is how Mr. Murray's work takes up the issue of narrative: the story that each painting tells us of its own creation. But the work evades an easy narrative of progression—the tale is not straightforward, not easily told—as the end of one painting is removed and placed in the middle of another, the beginning and subsequent layers of paint is visible in spots and concealed elsewhere. His work is demanding in that it makes strange and new what was once familiar, dressing up dissonance in its sublime Sunday best.

Opening next at PATRICK MIKHAIL GALLERY...BEAUTY AND THE GROTESQUE, a new exhibition by installation artist DEBORAH MARGO, from January 7 to February 3, 2009.

For more information:

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Why I Am Not a Painter

*I am not a painter, I am a poet.
Why? I think I would rather be
a painter, but I am not. Well,
for instance, Mike Goldberg
is starting a painting. I drop in.
"Sit down and have a drink" he
says. I drink; we drink. I look
up. "You have SARDINES in it."
"Yes, it needed something there."
"Oh." I go and the days go by
and I drop in again. The painting
is going on, and I go, and the days
go by. I drop in. The painting is
finished. "Where's SARDINES?"
All that's left is just
letters, "It was too much," Mike says.*

*But me? One day I am thinking of
a color: orange. I write a line
about orange. Pretty soon it is a
whole page of words, not lines.
Then another page. There should be
so much more, not of orange, of
words, of how terrible orange is
and life. Days go by. It is even in
prose, I am a real poet. My poem
is finished and I haven't mentioned
orange yet. It's twelve poems, I call
it ORANGES. And one day in a gallery
I see Mike's painting, called SARDINES.*

*Frank O'Hara
1957*