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# TWO COATS OF PAINT

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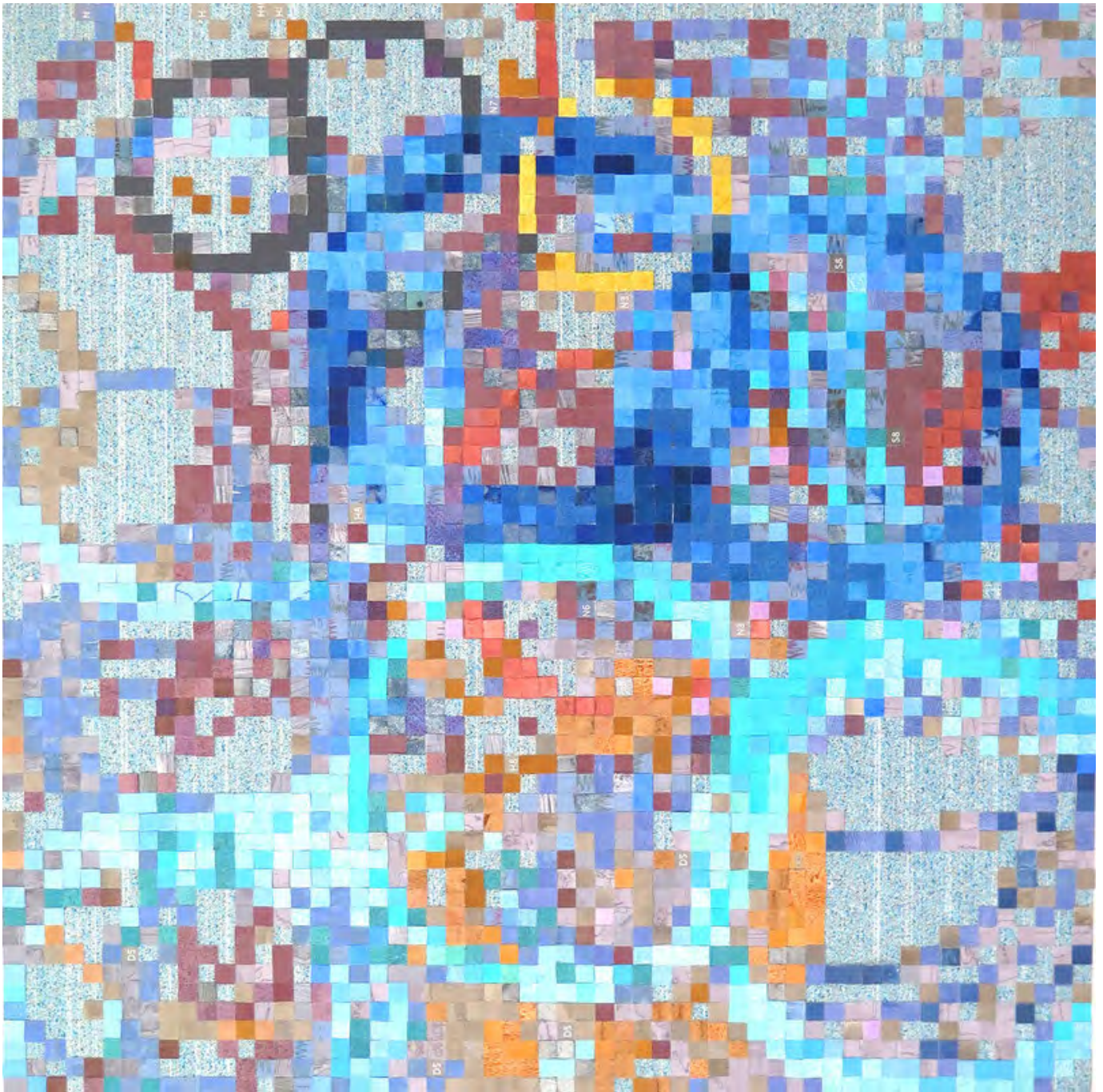


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## GALLERY SHOWS

# Coherent divergence at John Molloy Gallery

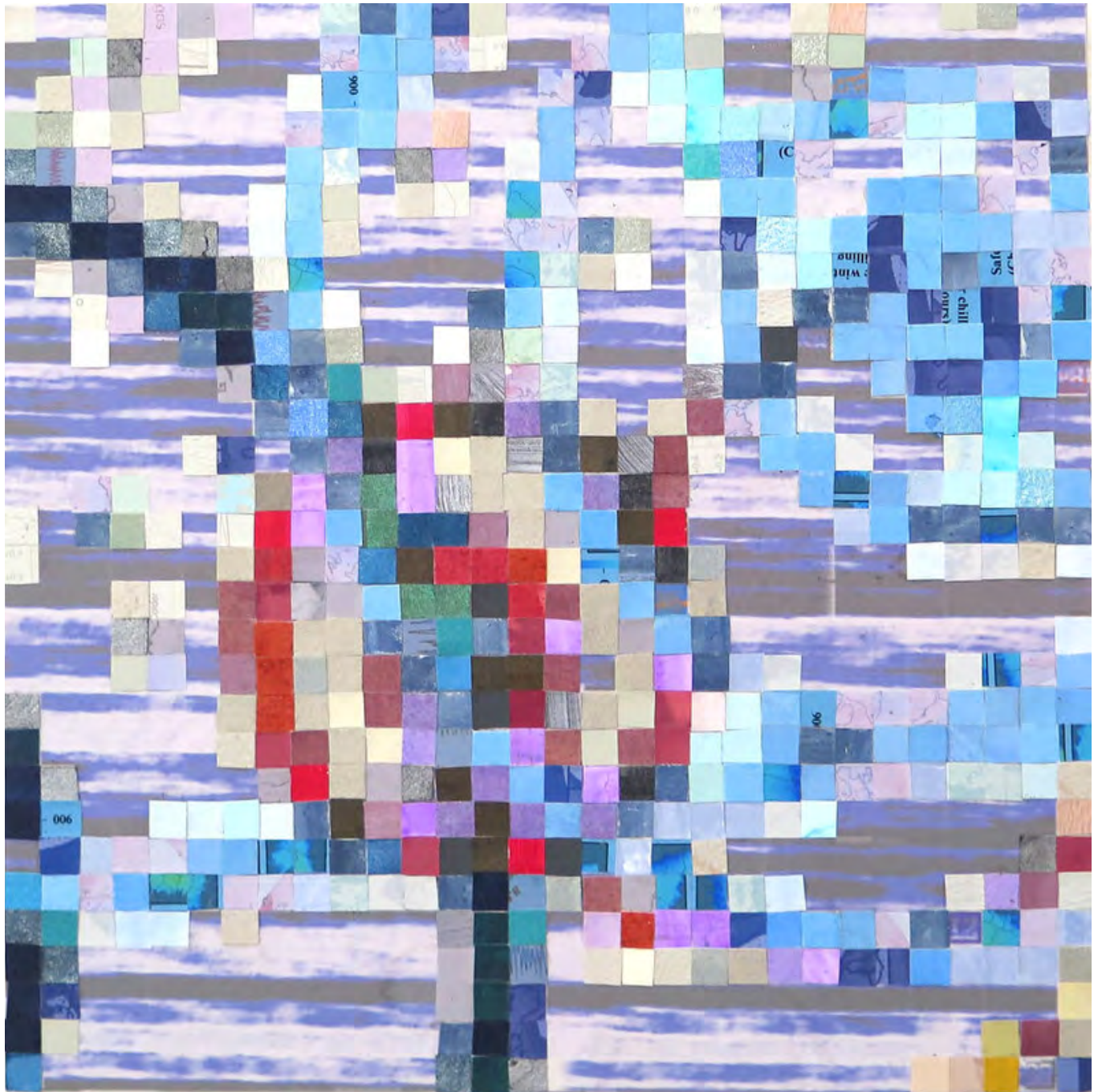
December 14, 2023 10:54 am



*Carter Hodgkin, Dither 12, cut paper collage with acrylic paint, inkjet & protective varnish on canvas over panel, 24 x 24 inches*

Contributed by Jonathan Stevenson / “Mutability,” a thoughtfully conceived and curated group show at John Molloy Gallery, by its title contemplates the elastic aesthetic capacities of painting, drawing, and sculpture. It further explores the compulsion of the three featured artists to segue from one form to another and thus to produce visually rich hybrids. While such formal nicety is interesting in itself, the work here also touches smartly on a range of more worldly concerns.





Carter Hodgkin, *Radial Dither 19*, 2019, cut paper with acrylic paint, inkjet, & protective varnish on canvas over panel

**Carter Hodgkin** derives her work, which combines painting and collage, from animation and digital code. It reads alternatively as pixelated images or as occluded content. Contrasting colors sharpen the sense of information withheld and pique curiosity and perhaps frustration. See, in particular, the enigmatic red shape that seems to be seeking repose in *Radial Dither 19*. These mesmerizing pieces get at increasingly unavoidable digital mediation between viewer and viewed as well as the gap between technically capturable information and the layperson's control of or access to it, which artists such as Steve DiBenedetto (whose work was recently on view at **David Nolan Gallery**), **Chris Dorland**, and **Steve Greene** have also cogently addressed.

While Hodgkin's work zones in on the digital thrum, **Drew Shiflett**'s untitled and essentially monochromatic wall reliefs are firmly, even sternly, analog. They recapitulate vaguely familiar – though not tightly referential – architectural motifs and tableaux by way of elegantly exacting line and considered, intensive reiteration. They are not

overtly sentimental or polemic, and don't forcefully convey a sense of yearning for the constraints of modernism. But her pieces do seem to insist on cognizable structure and to gently resist open-ended creative drift. In sum, they are sane and grounded, as well as handsomely rendered.



*Helen O'Leary, Cost #6, 2018-21, egg tempera and eggshell chalk on linen on wood*





*Helen O'Leary, Cost #19, 2018-21, tempera and eggshell chalk on linen on wood, linen*

Irish-born **Helen O'Leary**'s uncannily penetrating three-dimensional constructions reach back farther still – sometimes, it seems, well into the twentieth century. They are swaggering in their jerry-built proletarianism, in-your-face shabbiness, and sardonic wit. *Problem with adjectives #2*, which resembles a ship becalmed by the perverse burdens of fine-tuning, could be poking fun at **Joycean prolixity** – O'Leary scans as closer to **Beckett** – or postmodern smugness; take your pick. The term “safe house” has a specific and ominous meaning in Ireland, and the eponymous piece – consisting of two spare wooden cottage frames and an explosively shaped but blandly white cut-out in the foreground – seizes on the uneasy proximity of political violence to everyday life with throat-catching terseness.

Overall, this exhibition is a deftly targeted reminder that while artists diverge widely in their respective vantage points, they share a penchant for visually distilling what strikes them as important and can, if they choose, use a variety of means to do so.



*Drew Shiflett, Untitled #96, 2022, watercolor, canvas threads, graphite, paper, handmade paper, 10 5/8 x 8 7/8 inches*





*Drew Shiflett, Untitled #98, 2023, watercolor, graphite, canvas, canvas threads, cheesecloth, handmade paper, 52 x 57 x 1 inch*

**“Mutability,” John Molloy Gallery**, 49 E. 78th Street, New York, NY. Through December 16, 2023.

**About the author:** **Jonathan Stevenson** is a New York-based policy analyst, writer, and editor, contributing to the *New York Times*, the *New York Review of Books*, and *Politico*, among other publications. He is a regular contributor to *Two Coats of Paint*.

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**NOTE:** The *Two Coats of Paint* 2023 **Year-end Fundraising Campaign** is in the final weeks, and our goal this year is to reach 100% reader and gallery participation. For contributions of \$150 and above, we'll send a gift — one of the new *Two Coats of Paint* coffee mugs. Everyone should have one, right? Please consider making a **tax deductible contribution** to support the project in 2024. Thank you for all your help keeping the conversation going.

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Tags: [Carter Hodgkin](#), [Drew Shiflett](#), [Helen O'Leary](#), [John Molloy Gallery](#), [Jonathan Stevenson](#), [Mutability](#)

## 3 Comments



**maureen mcquillan**

December 14, 2023 at 4:42 pm

Nicely articulated review! These observations ring true, and read fresh. Nice tribute to three very deserving artists.



**Drew Shiflett**

December 14, 2023 at 4:57 pm

Thank you, Jonathan Stevenson, for this thoughtful, beautifully written review — “Coherent divergence at John Molloy Gallery.” I was so surprised and happy to see it this morning!



**Alison Slon**

December 15, 2023 at 5:42 am

Excellent review of this cohesive show of these three remarkable artists. Well worth stepping out to see!

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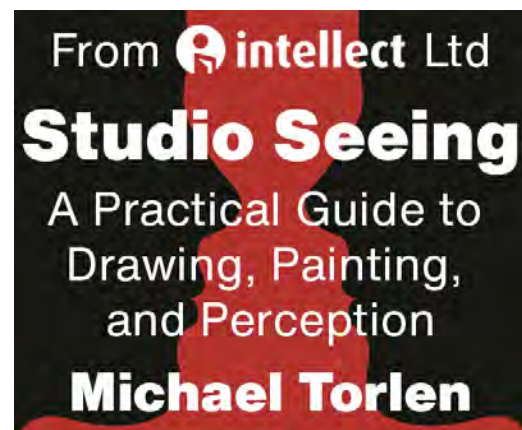
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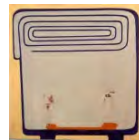
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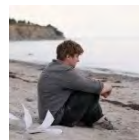
## Hudson Valley & vicinity: Dec 2023

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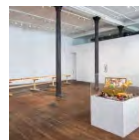
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Contributed by Barbara A. MacAdam / In his solo show "Shiner" at Peter Freeman, Inc.,...



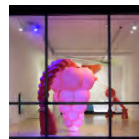
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Contributed by Vittorio Colaizzi / "I vehemently reject the claim that mark making by itself...



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Contributed by David Carrier / Emilio Vedova (1919–2006), who lived and worked in Venice, was...



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Contributed by Fintan Boyle / A sense of serious satire has pervaded Nancy Davidson's



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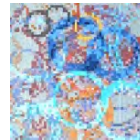
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