

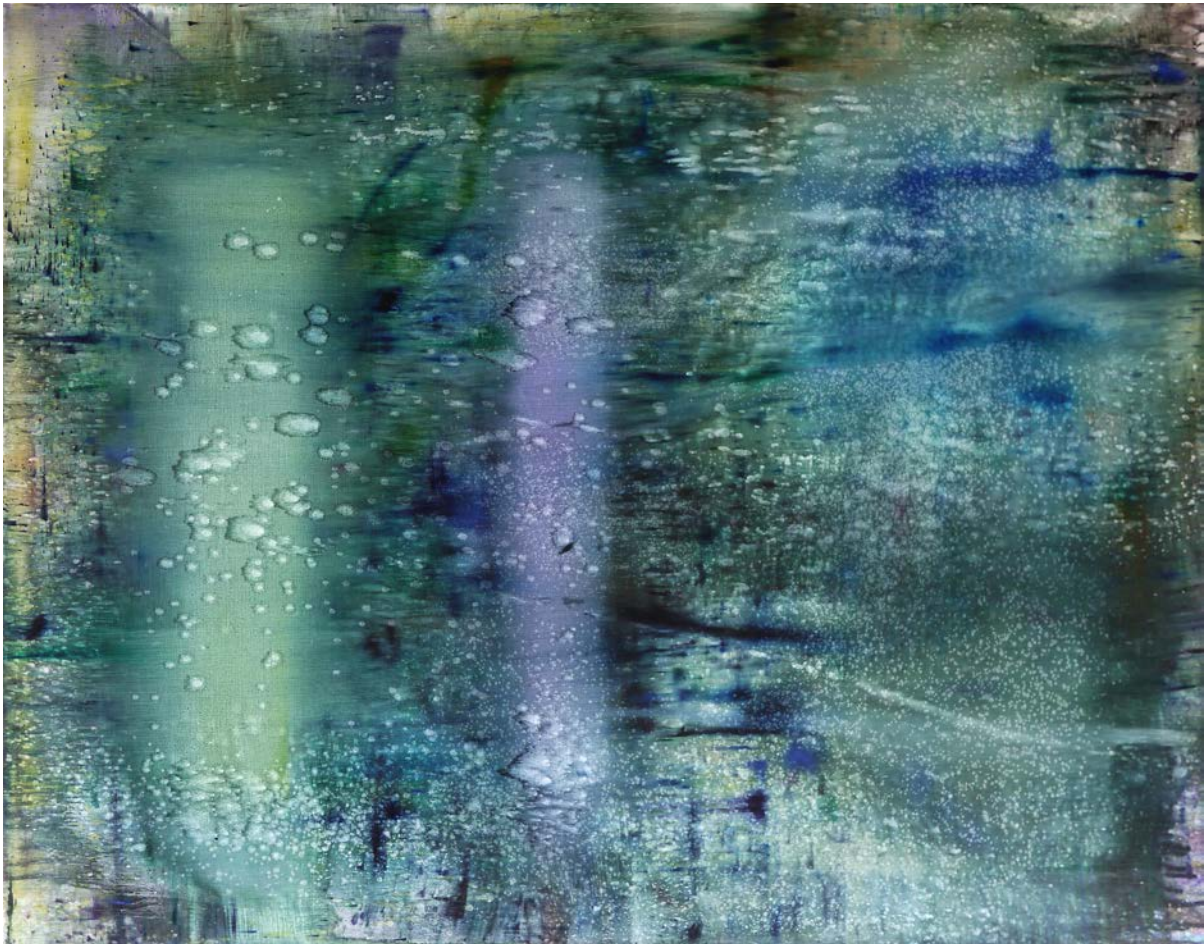
ARTSY

In Matthias Meyer's Canvases, Paint Masquerades as Water

ARTSY EDITORIAL

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In his latest solo show at Danese/Corey opening tonight, German contemporary painter Matthias Meyer continues his exploration of the visual richness of water. His recent oil-on-canvas compositions are filled with a range of lush hues—from inky blues and blacks to pastel shades of green and violet—and take viewers onto the surface and into the depths of the lakes, ponds, and bogs that have long caught his eye.



Matthias Meyer, *Kodai*, 2015
Danese/Corey

Meyer studied painting at Germany's highly regarded Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, with one of the medium's contemporary masters: Gerhard Richter whose squeegee paintings are a touchstone for Meyer's smooth, liquid surfaces. But while Richter's oeuvre spans many subjects, Meyer focuses on water as a vehicle to explore abstraction and the malleability of paint. Indeed, Meyer incorporates the elemental liquid into every step of his process. First, he thins his paints so that they resemble the consistency of water. He then applies them to the surface of wetted canvases, which encourages blending. He likewise relinquishes a measure of control over his oils, allowing them to drip, run, and flow much like water itself.



Matthias Meyer, *Melbourne*, 2013
Danese/Corey

These methods result in works characterized by both abstraction and naturalism, and which effectively convey the play of light, shadow, and color on bodies of water. The surface of *Zweige* (2013), for example, features a cacophony of delicate, energetic lines that resolve into a tangle of reeds. Bursting across the composition, they could be reflected in, or submerged beneath, the blue and purple surface of a pond. In *Wand* (2014), bubbles disrupt the deep blue-green water that appears to gently undulate across the canvas. Here, it is difficult to determine whether Meyer plunges viewers underwater or whether we are skimming its surface. Such indeterminacy animates all of the artist's paintings and holds our eye as we untangle his watery visions. Similarly, in *Melbourne* (2013), the grey-violet pigment that covers the canvas could be a frozen waterscape, crisscrossed by the dark shadows of tree branches, or the rippling surface of a river, released of its winter chill in early spring.

—Karen Kedmey

“Matthias Meyer” on view at Danese/Corey, New York, Jan. 8–Feb. 6, 2016.