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ART GALLERY

In the Studio – Aaron Collier

by Sherar Rimpsey

Arts Writer and Editor

Newcomb Art Museum



Aaron Collier. *Of the Rocks*, 2018 (detail), Flashe on canvas, 36"x36", photo courtesy of the artist

During my studio visit with painter Aaron Collier, much of our conversation revolved around presence and human frailty. The divine. The body is so fully in the room in his paintings. Evidence of a heartbeat, a full and tender heart. There is a communion in the mind. There must be. Which gives way to everything else—the body yielding, plentiful. Whole. The capacity for a sheltering spirit. And what color holds.

In *Of the Rocks* from 2018, the colors divulge total abandon inside of a deft restraint. There are rocks, ledges, platforms, hints of jetties, plumes, cliffs, limbs. Bluuuuuuue lapping at coral and tar and gold and olive—lapping at light. Patterning or quickening from 'sheer' to occluded form. Such wonder. Swaths of color won't sit still yet they build into and come out of an unflinching stillness. The core of this abstraction is curiosity, unstemmed. The mind is brimming. And duplicitous—herein lies Collier's form.

This work is a departure from his earlier paintings that feel more dispersed and have chunks of color forming a blockade on the canvas. The paintings of the last decade are more to the point. Collier is a precise thinker who takes extensive notes on his paintings to further uncover what's happening in the work. An avid reader, he essentially researches the medium itself. The work is not only about contemplation—there's a demanding athleticism inside his abstraction.

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What Collier does, with enormous measure, is particularize structure, and in doing so, he particularizes form. Complicit in this is the gravitational pull of the image. Things land. Embed. Lament some sort of quell in the incomplete. Grapple with being. Collier spoke of how pure color "emerges unexpectedly from an expenditure"—what might be the most urgent aspect of his work. A painting's momentum. Force. Release.



Aaron Collier, *Of the Rocks*, 2018, Flashe on canvas, 36 x 36 inches, photo courtesy of the artist



Aaron Collier's studio, photo courtesy of the artist