



ART REVIEW: Susan Vecsey - Convergence of Form, Color and Space

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by Gabrielle Selz

For a number of years now, Susan Vecsey—whose work is currently on view in “Susan Vecsey—Recent Paintings” at the newly opened Quogue Gallery through September 29—has concentrated her attention on the horizon line, on the point where land, sky and water converge.

Her paintings, often of reduced, abstracted compositions in drenching colors, involve the interplay of elements. Not just the fundamental elements of nature, or the rich repertoire of colors she uses to represent these components, but more specifically the interaction of color, form and space.

Vecsey, who works in New York and East Hampton, devoted herself full-time to her painting as recently as 2008. At the Quogue Gallery, she is exhibiting richly saturated paintings with horizontal lines and angular wedges of space that allude to imagery while at the same time remaining evocative and mysterious.

Inspired by painters like Paul Cézanne, Henri Matisse, Mark Rothko, Milton Avery and Helen Frankenthaler—all of whom explored the variance of tonality on limited compositional formats—Vecsey creates work that is filled with ideas about arrangement, lyrical color, perspective, repetition and surface.

Starting with charcoal drawings on paper, she makes a multitude of color studies in her studio before arriving at her final choice. She seeks a poetic composition of colors that create an emotional experience for her viewers. Rendered with oil paints thinned down with turpentine on linen canvases, Vecsey’s reduced shapes are saturated with color. As in the work of Frankenthaler, the color and fabric become embedded, yet the weave of the uneven linen that Vecsey uses lends a texture to the surfaces.

By diluting her oils with turpentine, the artist gives her tints a vaporous, watercolor feel. Sometimes she lets a coat of paint dry for a few weeks before applying another. Still, her canvases appear as washes of veiled fields. In the brilliant *Sammy’s Beach, East Hampton*, a straw yellow sky melts into the creamy triangle of beach below.



“Sammy’s Beach, East Hampton” by Susan Vecsey, 2009. Oil on Linen, 36 x 36 inches. Courtesy of Quogue Gallery.

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With simplified shapes and soft ambiance Vecsey can explore different qualities of feeling. Whites and greys are layered or flipped, creating subtly different shifts of emotional temperament.

In the atmospheric diptych, *Big Waves at Georgica Beach, East Hampton*, Vecsey's palette of blues, greys, whites and even hues of brown and green all combine to produce a stormy presence. One year later, by the time she creates the flatter, more geometric *Untitled (Grey Waves)*, she uses a similar mix of colors, but she has abandoned the reference point of a title, preferring to let the painting speak for itself. Altogether, this work presents a less turbulent, more subdued composition, an impression that is almost minimal in mood and design.

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"Big Waves at Georgica Beach, East Hampton" by Susan Vecsey, 2012. Oil on paper, 31 ¾ x 39 ¾ inches each (diptych). Courtesy of Quogue Gallery.



"Untitled (Grey Waves)" by Susan Vecsey, 2013. Oil on linen, 23 x 59 inches. Courtesy of Quogue Gallery.

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Clearly, Vecsey is creating a set of rules for herself. While limiting the format of her configurations and her orientation to them, she investigates proportion and scale, using canvases of different sizes and an enormous range of color.

Untitled (Green) is only 12 x 14 inches, barely bigger than a large coffee table art book. Yet with its vivid green this small image packs the powerful punch and richness of a freshly mowed lawn. In this painting, the configuration is not weighted towards the bottom, but the brilliant green nearly overtakes the whole canvas to the point where you can almost smell the flavor of spring.

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"Untitled (Green)" by Susan Vecsey, 2014. Oil on Linen, 12 x 14 inches. Courtesy of Quogue Gallery.

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Untitled (Red) is a very recent large, vermillion red canvas. With its winding brown path coursing through the lower quadrant of the painting, it is both bold and nuanced. A darker, thinner line of red

appears above, like a mirror image that sandwiches the space and creates a world within a world, a wedge of red within the vast red sea of the painting.

The abundance of Vermillion, of course, speaks of Matisse and Rothko, both famous for their handling of this color. Here Vecsey's interpretation is less dazzling, less about passion and death, but with its curved arching path, still a testimony to commitment and exploration. And one can't help but applaud her audacity.



"Untitled (Red)" by Susan Vecsey, 2014. Oil on linen, 54 x 54 inches. Courtesy of Quogue Gallery.

More importantly, in deliberately exploring a system, a schematic that again and again maps a convergent point, Vecsey is perfecting a technique. With her reduced compositional elements and harmonic colors, she is creating her own rhythmic language.

BASIC INFO: "Susan Vecsey: Recent Paintings" remains on view through September 29. The Quogue Gallery is located at 44 Quogue Street, Quogue, NY 11959. www.quoguegallery.com.