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DAVID MICHAEL SLONIM & THEODORE WADDELL

# Forms of abstraction

The reach of the abstract expressionist painters of midcentury New York and the Bay Area is long and deep. **Theodore Waddell** studied briefly in New York City in the 1960s, a decade after the painters of the movement had set the art world on its ear. He returned to Montana to manage a cattle ranch and to paint the horses and cattle he

knows so well. Thomas Brent Smith, director of the Petrie Institute of Western American Art at the Denver Art Museum, writes, "Theodore Waddell has successfully coupled fundamentals of the abstract expressionist movement with real subjects."

Another abstract painter, **David Michael Slonim**, explains, "I started out as a plein

air painter. The more I painted and studied, the more fascinated I became with abstraction. Now I am more interested in interpreting nature than representing nature." He continues, "I feel an affinity with the abstract expressionists of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, sharing the belief that relationships of color, space and texture can convey aspects of human experience in purely visual terms."

Both artists, and their takes on abstraction, are exhibiting together at Altamira Fine Art in Scottsdale, Arizona, February 2 through 14.

Waddell often relates that Western artists tell him he's too modern in his painting, and modern artists object to the fact he has recognizable subject matter. His horses and cattle often dissolve into marks on the canvas in a foreshortened space that alters the landscape, but leaves enough information to relate to the reality of grazing horses and cattle.

Slonim refers to his paintings as "color poems; visual rhythms, which are meant to be, as Delacroix put it, 'a feast for the eyes.'" The viewer can "read into" paintings such as *Modulation No. 1* and imagine snowy fields, fog, lakes and plowed ground, or can free associate in what the artist calls his "abstract color poems."

Painter Richard Diebenkorn, whom Slonim admires, wrote, "Abstract literally means to draw from or separate. In this sense, every artist is abstract...a realistic or nonobjective approach makes no difference. The result is what counts."

Waddell's and Slonim's abstractions complement each other and offer a stimulating dialogue to the viewer. ●



**1**  
**David Michael Slonim,**  
*Modulation No. 9,*  
oil on linen, 48 x 36"

**3**  
**David Michael Slonim,**  
*Modulation No. 2,*  
oil on linen, 48 x 36"

**2**  
**Theodore Waddell,**  
*Monida Angus #20,*  
oil on canvas, 48 x 48"

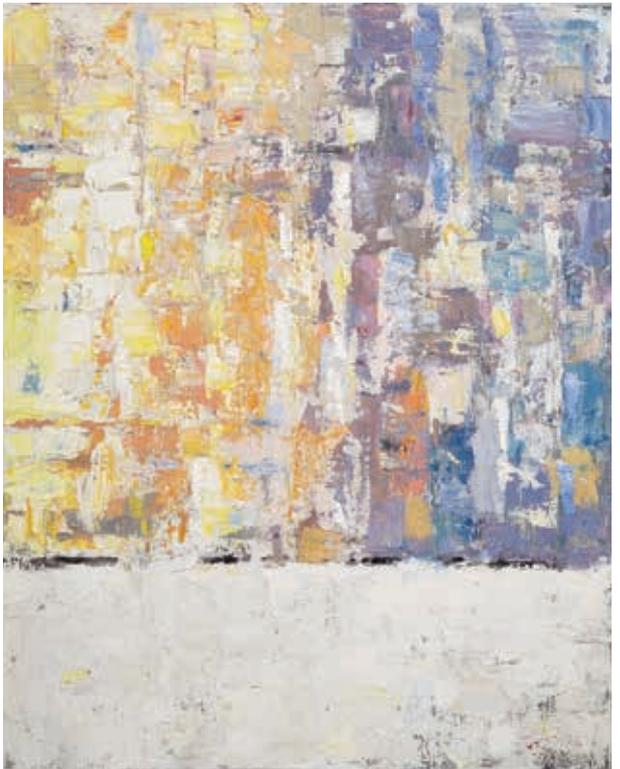
**4**  
**David Michael Slonim,**  
*Yellow & Blue Over White,*  
oil on linen, 30 x 24"



2



3



4