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Fab Ab: New Acrylic Abstraction
opens at the Salt Lake Art Center on March 31, 2007

Salt Lake City, UT - The Salt Lake Art Center opens an exciting new exhibition, Fab Ab: New Acrylic Abstraction, which features the work of seven artists - William Betts, Joseph Drapell, Prudencio Irazabal, Graham Peacock, Susie Rosmarin, Jesse Simon, and Colin C. Smith. This broad selection of artwork, never before shown in Utah, embraces differences in generation, process, school, and style demonstrating the scientific breakthroughs in plastics, paints, and the use of digital technologies in their paintings.

After the invention of the first acrylic paints in the 1950s, artists discovered they could vary the effects of acrylic polymer emulsion, which is clear when first made, by adding pigment, diluting it with water or modifying it with gels, mediums and pastes. Those simple alterations result in slower drying, different viscosity and texture and could also achieve high gloss or matte finishes. To affect light refraction, the acrylics could be enhanced with additives such as holographic glitter, metallic powder, and air micro-bubbles. The mixture can be applied with brushes and rollers, combs and air guns, even poured or molded onto surfaces including canvas, wood, aluminum, and foam. The seven artists in the exhibition Fab Ab: New Acrylic Abstraction push the use of acrylics to achieve different modes of abstraction and the results are astonishingly beautiful and complex.

Colin C. Smith of Omaha, Nebraska has adopted a "mod" aesthetic of motifs and patterns produced by applying pigmented resin to aluminum panels in many layers, using air guns and other tools, with vinyl blocking and stencils - not unlike automotive design.

Houston-based artist William Betts’ paintings have their roots in digital photography, industrial technology processes, and classical painting. They are a complicated disassembly and reconstruction of photographs. Betts designed a machine for paint application which produces a multi-hued line painting of acrylic on composite.

Joseph Drapell, born and raised in the former Czechoslovakia and current resident of Toronto, experiments with application processes and paint additives. Drapell starts with matte fields, which he then layers with flowing high gloss paint spread with combs to create ridged surfaces, that both capture and reflect light.
Projecting forward from the 1960s, New York artist **Susie Rosmarin** takes a hard-edge approach with an Op Art effect. She uses both clashing and harmonious palettes, as well as stark black and white, creating grids that overlap and interweave. The results emulate woven canvas and textiles or TV screen test patterns, enlarged beyond normal scope in precise composition.

**Prudencio Irazabal**, born and raised in Spain and now resident of New York, uses a palette that is jewel-like, with hues applied in thin semi-transparent layers. Made possible by thinning the acrylics, these layers reflect and refract light creating optical space in which colors, both complementary and analogous, and planes dissolve into one another.

Reflecting West coast culture of Los Angeles is **Jesse Simon** who merges the grittiness of graffiti with a slick surfboard aesthetic and moves acrylic painting into sculptural relief. Simon begins with high-density foam mounted on wood which he shapes by carving rounded edges and deep grooves with power tools and then seals under shape-conforming acrylic resin tinted with pigments.

**Graham Peacock**, born and raised in England but long-time resident of Edmonton, inherited from Jackson Pollock and others the ‘poured and dripped’ style of the post-WWII era, which he reinvented as personal and playful experimentation. Peacock begins with enormous lengths of canvas upon which he pours paint in layers, each drying at a different rate, producing marbling and crazing. He later cuts out specific segments which are stretched onto custom-built stretchers, padded with foam to build relief areas, and reworked with the addition of foam, glass beads and mirror to the surface.

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**The public is invited to attend the Opening Reception for**

**Fab Ab: New Acrylic Abstraction**

**on Friday, March 30, 2007 from 6 to 9 p.m.**

At 7 p.m., artist Jesse Simon will deliver an Art Talk about his artwork in the exhibition.

*Fab Ab: New Acrylic Abstraction was curated by Jay Heuman for the Salt Lake Art Center. This exhibition was made possible through generous support from the John and Marcia Price Family Foundation, Alternative Visions, Bald Guy Consulting, Inc., and anonymous donors.*

Admission to the Art Center and Opening Reception is always FREE.

The Salt Lake Art Center is located at 20 S. West Temple between Abravanel Hall and the Salt Lake Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Hours: Tue, Wed, Thu & Sat: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Fri: 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Closed Sun, Mon & Holidays.

For more information call 801-328-4201 or visit www.slartcenter.org

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