

RECENT PAINTINGS

MICHEL DAIGNEAULT

Opening receptions: Saturday, November 3, 2001, 2 - 5 pm

Pari Nadimi Gallery

80 Spadina Ave., Ste. 403, Toronto, ON M5V 2J3

Tel 416.591.6464 Fax 416.591.9251

The exhibition continues to November 24, 2001
gallery hours: Tuesday - Saturday 11 - 5 pmMichel Daigneault
at Pari Nadimi

By GARY MICHAEL DAULT

The paintings making up Michel Daigneault's new exhibition, which bears the absorbing and exhausting title *clock in clock off clock on clock out clock up*, are committedly abstract paintings. This already locates them in crisis, given the rough road abstraction -- that is to say *non-representational* art -- is walking these days.

But Daigneault's paintings are not just abstract. Indeed, for the past few years this ambitious artist, who divides his life between spates of teaching in Lethbridge, Alta., and concentrated periods of painting in France, has been trying hard to find another way -- his own way -- to make abstract paintings.

His method revolves around what he terms "the discursive potential of abstraction." Which means, among other things, that he sees abstraction "as a process for activating combinations between competing conditions of reality."

This is in itself pretty abstract. But here's what it's all about, worked out on canvas.

In a painting such as the magisterial *Who Craves* -- one of the two undeniable masterworks in the exhibition (the other being a big painting called *Generally Impulsive*) -- Daigneault's "competing conditions of reality" compete on a vast, sky-like expanse of picture-plane.

Here, abstract shapes -- which are *nearly* patches of quilted cloud cover -- are nudged up close to imagery, only to dance away again into pure, non-referential shape. The lulling skyness of the painting is interfered with, in this case, by a wandering line of electric blue, like a live wire, that meanders by, paying brief homage to a white, puzzle-like patch of paint that has no business in a sky anyhow.

In earlier works, Daigneault affixed beads of hardened glue to the canvas, along with threads and bits of shiny paper -- anything to disrupt and intensify the viewing process. These new paintings are much more relaxed. There are fewer interferences, fewer devices. Now, Daigneault is depending on his manipulation of pure paint on canvas to carry out his brand of subversive abstraction. And it works superbly.

\$1,500-\$7,500. Until Nov. 24, 80 Spadina Ave., Suite 403, Toronto; 416-591-6464.