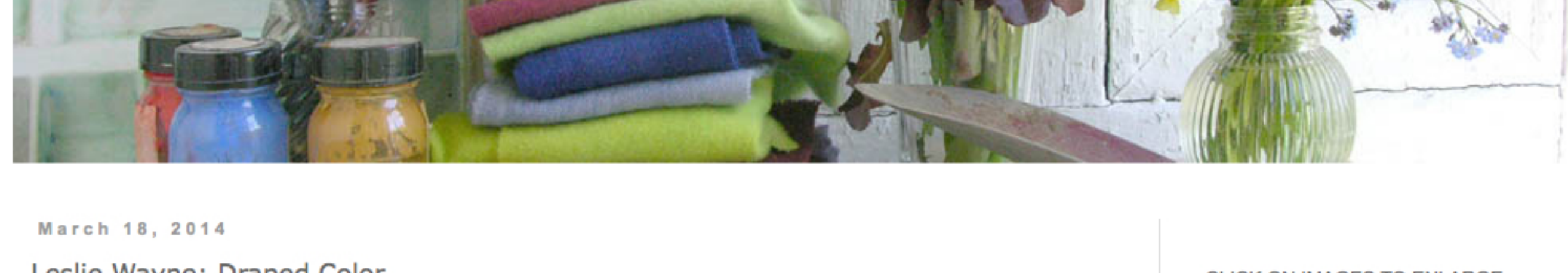


# Studio and Garden

by Altoon Sultan



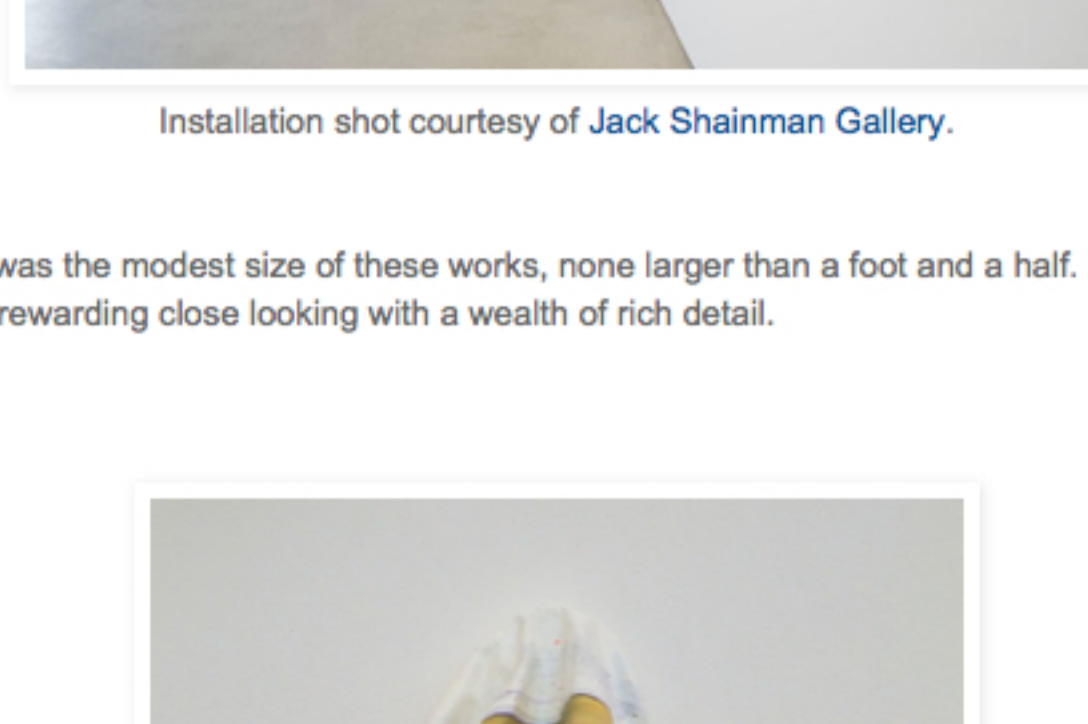
March 18, 2014

Leslie Wayne: Draped Color



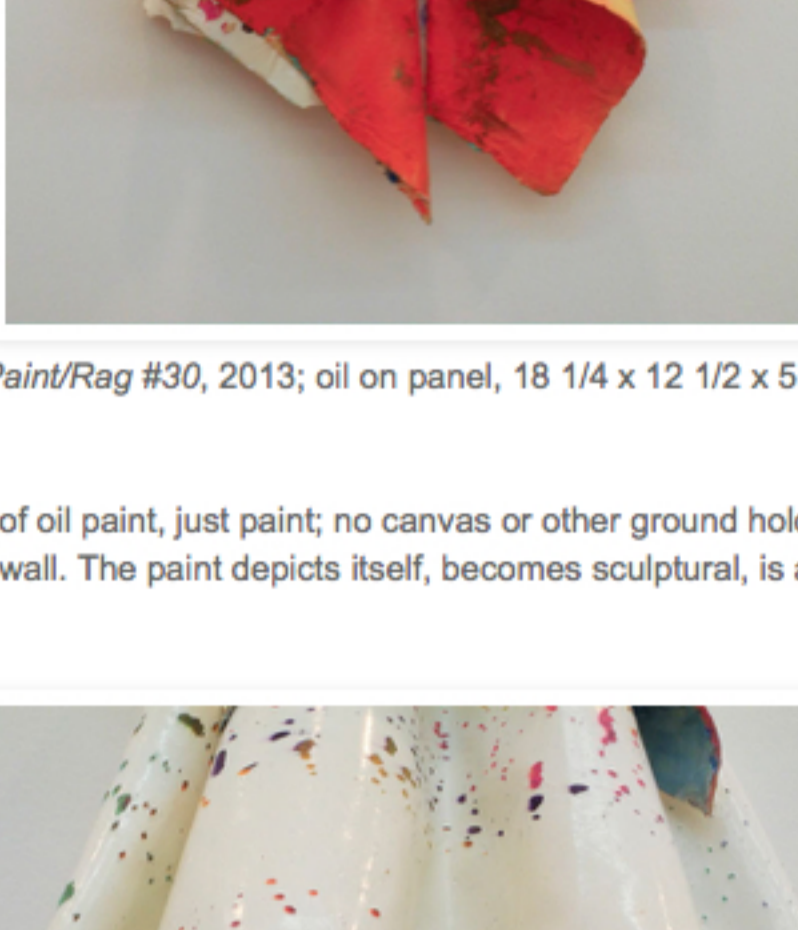
Paint/Rag #36, 2014; oil on panel, 16 1/2 x 9 1/2 x 6 in.

I was totally surprised and delighted when I walked into Jack Shainman Gallery to see Leslie Wayne's exhibition "Rags". I was surprised because they were not what I expected from seeing them online; this was yet another instance that made clear how much we miss seeing work solely onscreen. I nearly didn't see the show because my online viewing had left me with a shrug as a response, which turned out to be so mistaken: I loved it.



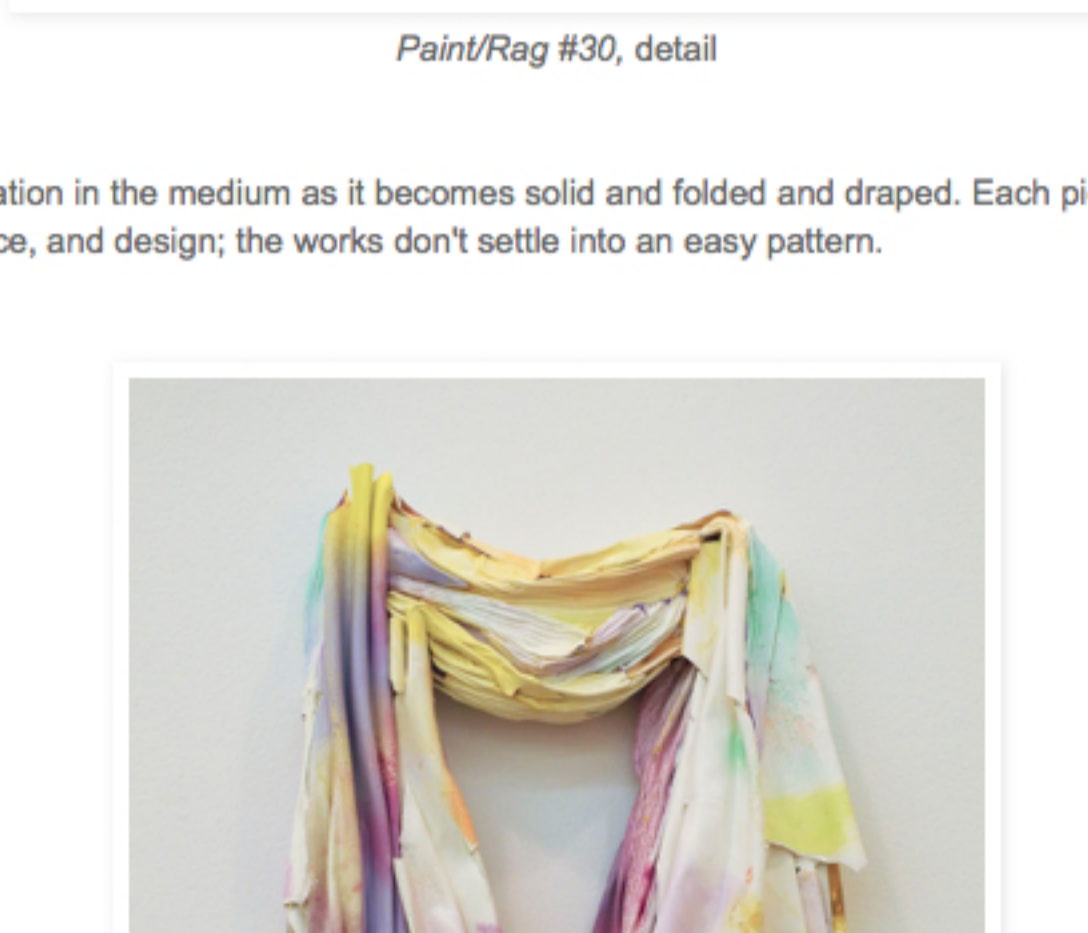
Installation shot courtesy of Jack Shainman Gallery.

What I hadn't expected was the modest size of these works, none larger than a foot and a half. Looking at them became an intimate experience, rewarding close looking with a wealth of rich detail.



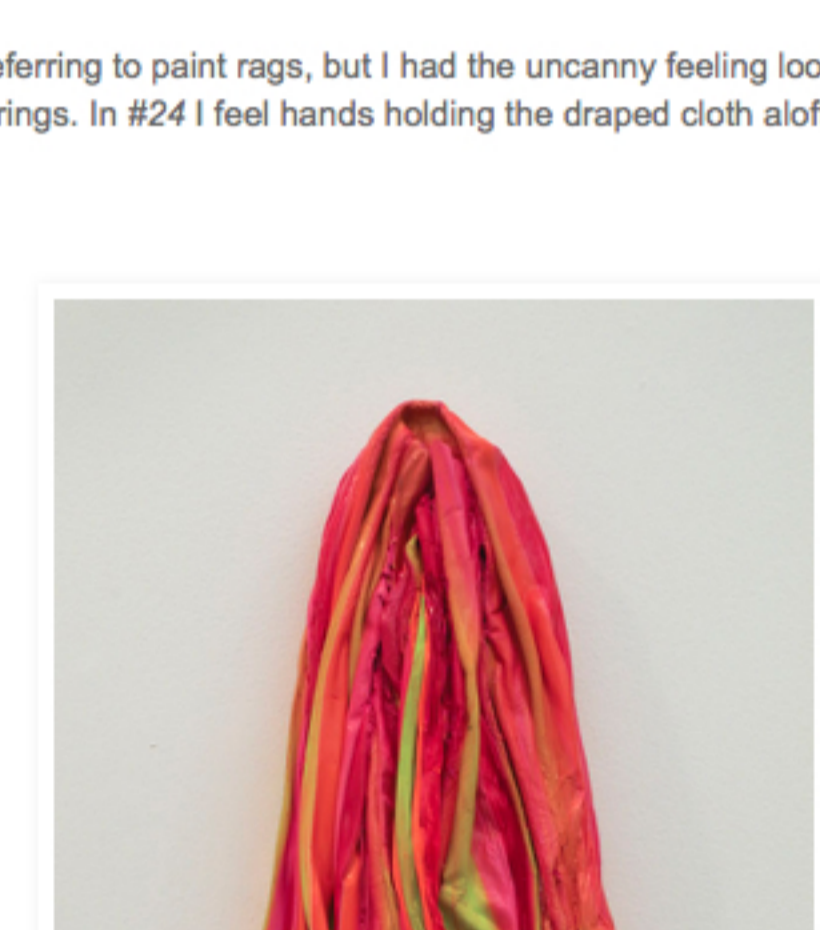
Paint/Rag #30, 2013; oil on panel, 18 1/4 x 12 1/2 x 5 in.

The paintings are made of layers of oil paint, just paint; no canvas or other ground holds them together. The panel is used to mount the painting to the wall. The paint depicts itself, becomes sculptural, is an evocative physical presence.



Paint/Rag #30, detail

There is a magical alteration in the medium as it becomes solid and folded and draped. Each piece has a different approach to color, surface, and design; the works don't settle into an easy pattern.



Paint/Rag #24, 2013; oil on panel, 14 x 10 in.

Wayne calls the show "Rags", referring to paint rags, but I had the uncanny feeling looking at this body of work that what I was seeing were prayerful offerings. In #24 I feel hands holding the draped cloth aloft, and kept thinking of Joseph's coat of many colors.



Paint/Rag #19, 2013; oil on panel, 14 x 7 1/2 x 2 1/4 in.

There is a tenderness and vulnerability to images of folded cloth, even when intense in color. It's strange that I have this response since I'm not a religious person, but there is something in the small size of these works and their irregular folds that touches me deeply.



Paint/Rag #31, 2013; oil on panel, 14 x 9 x 4 1/2 in.

In their forms I am reminded of Medieval and early Renaissance paintings with folds of dresses and cloaks spread out around the Virgin and saints.



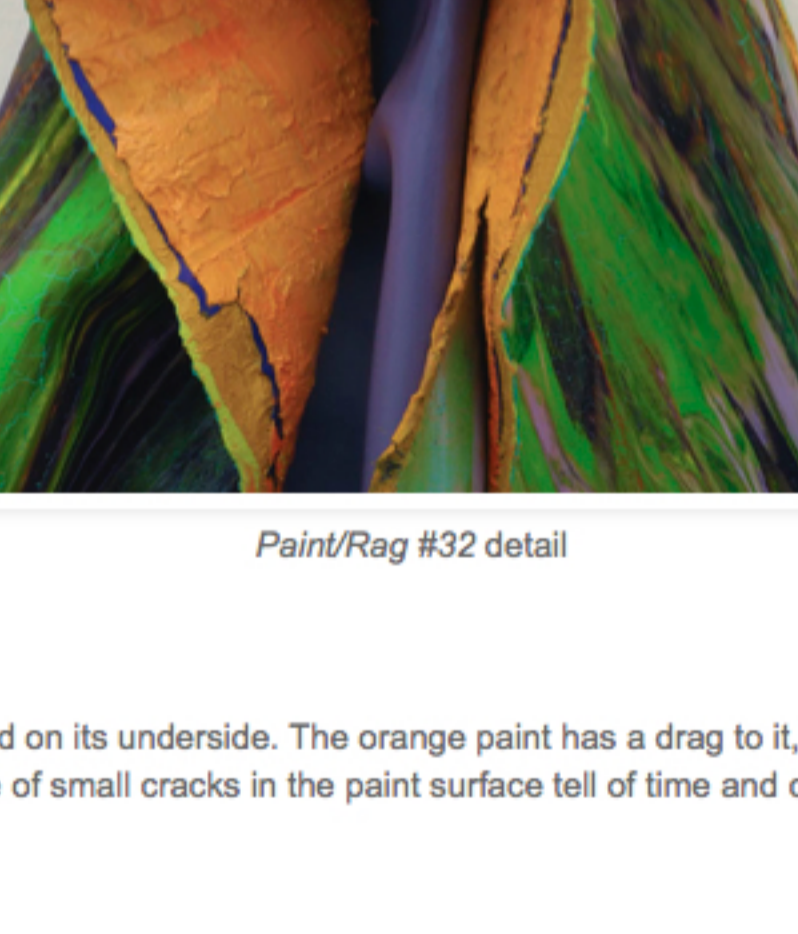
Paint/Rag #31 detail

The surfaces and colors are juicy and rich.



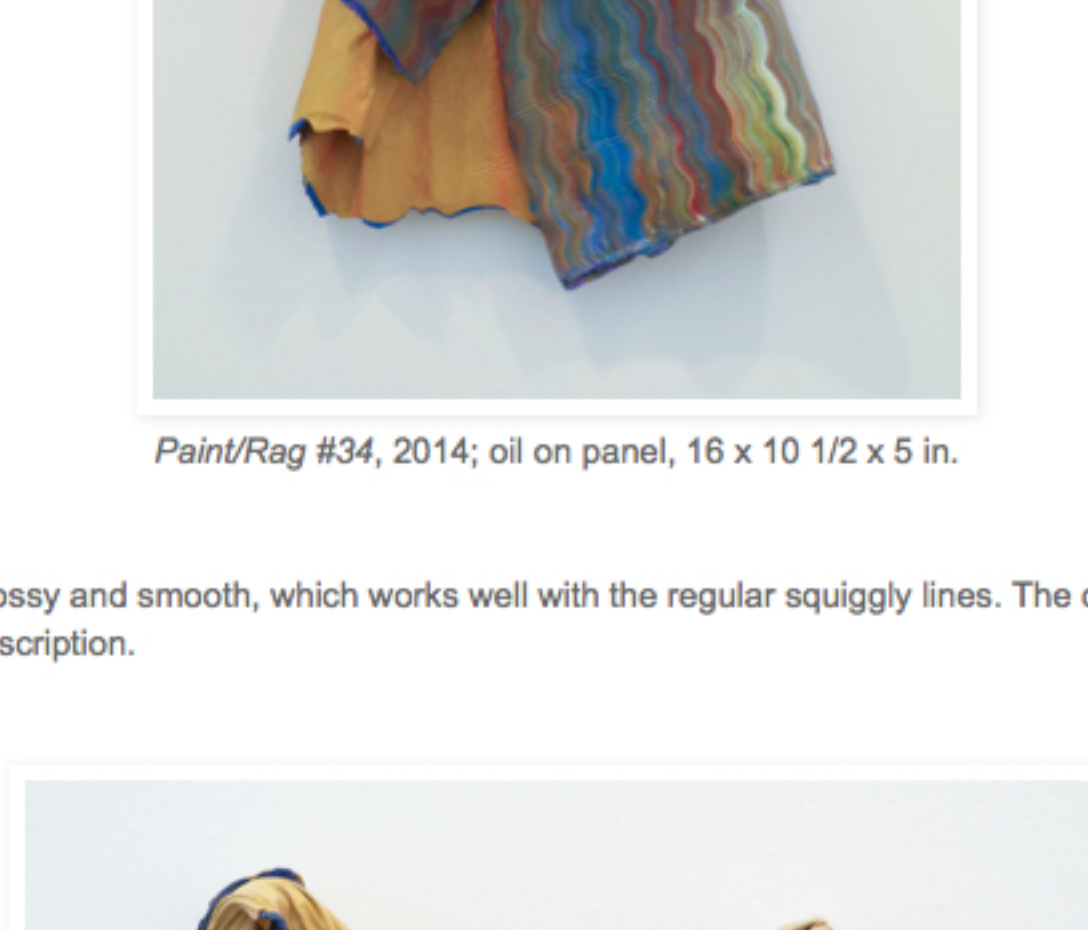
Paint/Rag #29, 2013; oil on panel, 14 x 9 1/2 x 5 3/8 in.

Then Wayne presents an austere cloth, white with a little bit of blue and yellow showing; the paint surface here is matte and seems to be worked with a knife so it has the look of plaster, as though it is the armature for a sculpture.



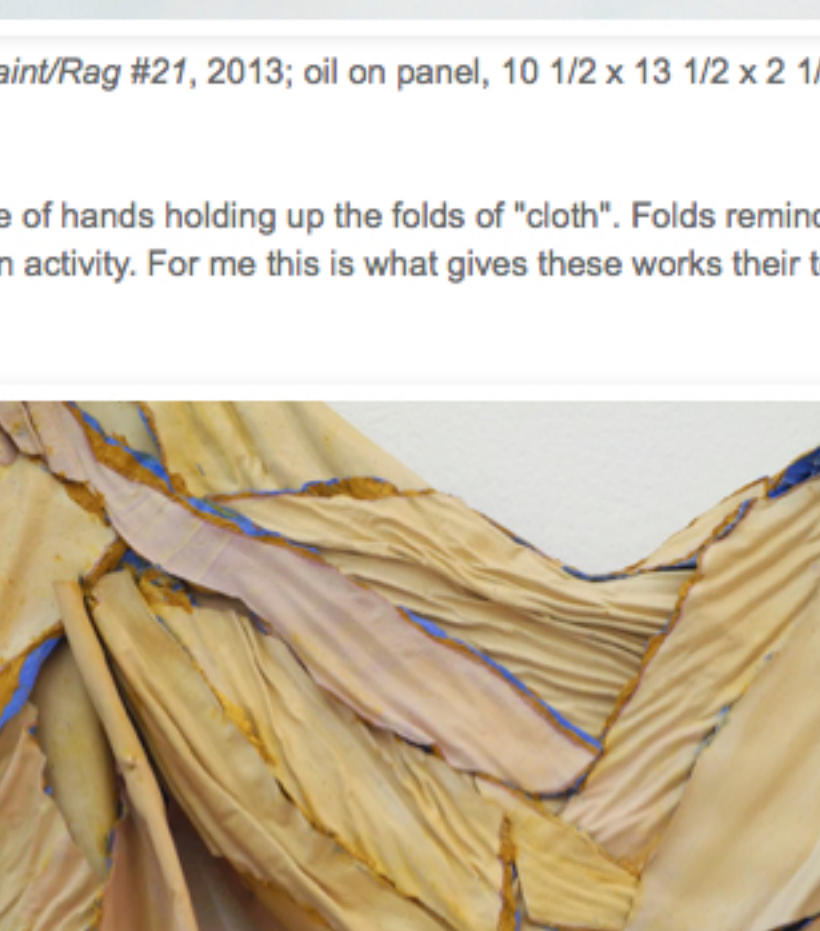
Paint/Rag #32, 2013; oil on panel, 15 x 9 1/2 x 6 in.

It is also wonderful to see the contrast of outer and inner colors, with the outside of the "rag" being multi-colored.....



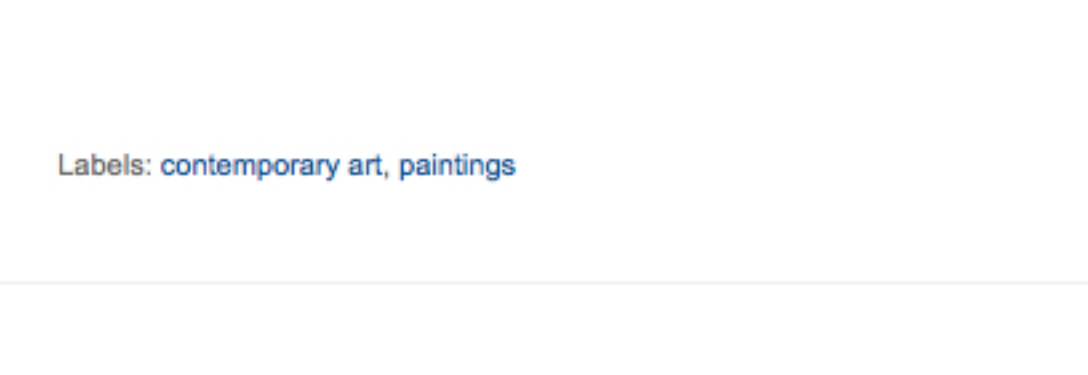
Paint/Rag #32 detail

.....while single colors are revealed on its underside. The orange paint has a drag to it, a gritty texture contrasted with the smoother outer surface. Evidence of small cracks in the paint surface tell of time and change.



Paint/Rag #34, 2014; oil on panel, 16 x 10 1/2 x 5 in.

The surface of #34 is glossy and smooth, which works well with the regular squiggly lines. The color is colorfully somber, if that's possible as a description.

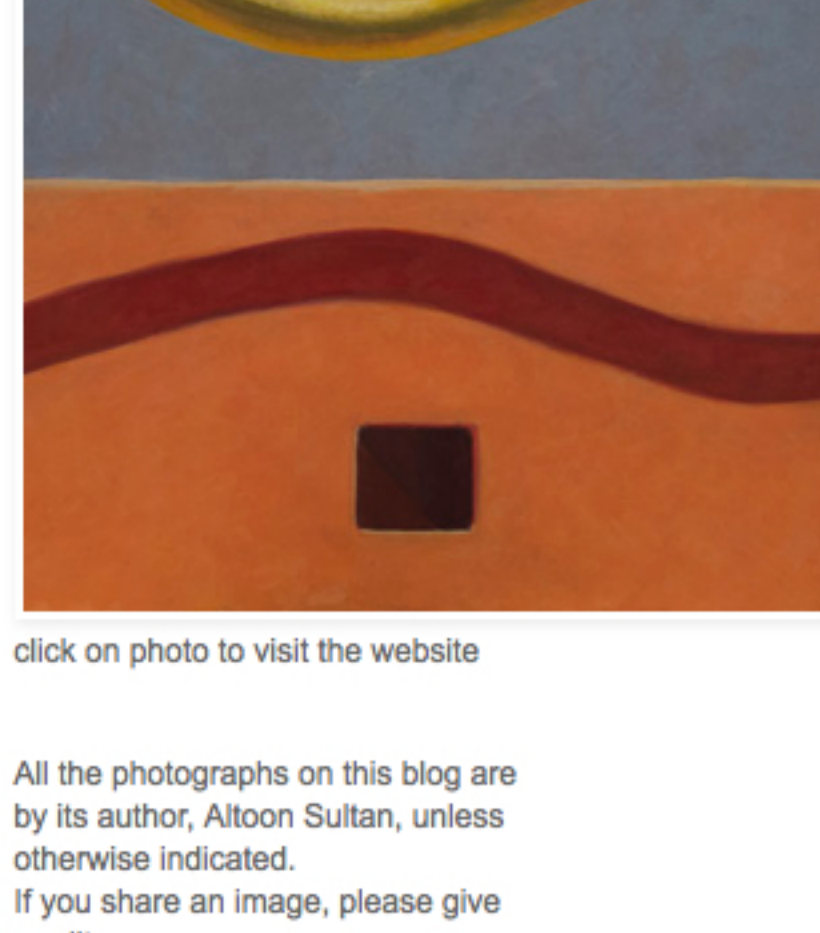


Paint/Rag #21 detail

I especially love this piece because of its ambiguity; it shows graceful folds but they are broken and brittle, their edges torn and jagged in places; this creates a subtle emotional tension. Rags are utilitarian things, rescued from other uses, generally tossed about and disregarded. Leslie Wayne's "Rags" are objects to treasure.

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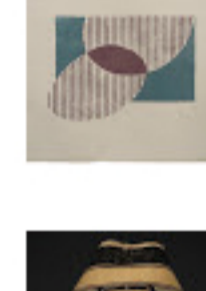
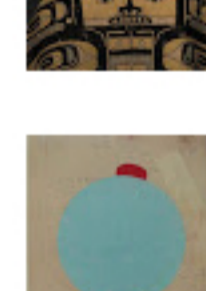

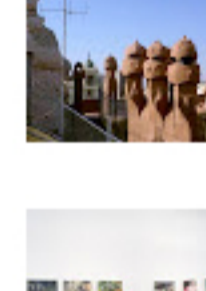
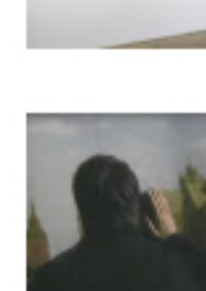
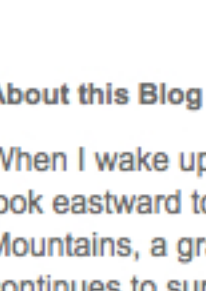
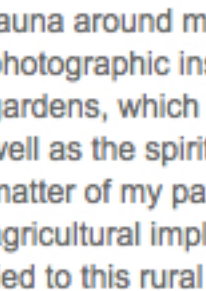
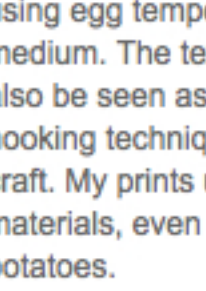
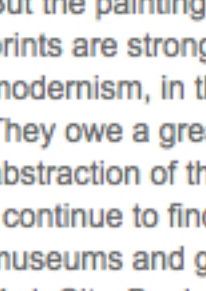
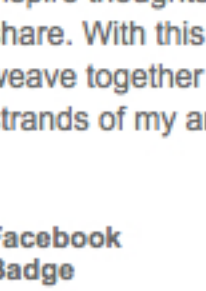
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About this Blog

When I wake up each morning, I look eastward toward the White Mountains, a grand view that continues to surprise this ex-New Yorker. The land, and the flora and fauna around me provide photographic inspiration, as do my gardens, which feed the body as well as the spirit. The subject matter of my paintings—agricultural implements—is very tied to this rural area; my printings and drawings are all produced using egg tempera, an ancient medium. The textiles I make can also be seen as relating, in their hooking technique, to a small town craft. My prints use ordinary materials, even garden produce: potatoes.


But the paintings, drawings, and prints are strongly tied to their modernism. In their form and color. They owe a great debt to abstraction of the 20th century, and I continue to find sustenance in the museums and galleries of New York City. Books and film also inspire thoughts that I wish to share. With this blog I hope to weave together all these various strands of my artistic life.

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Profile

  
**Altoon Sultan**  
I'm a native New Yorker—from the Flatbush area of Brooklyn—and now paint, make textiles and prints, and garden on an old hill farm in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. My works are in many public and private collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and the Tate Gallery, London.  
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