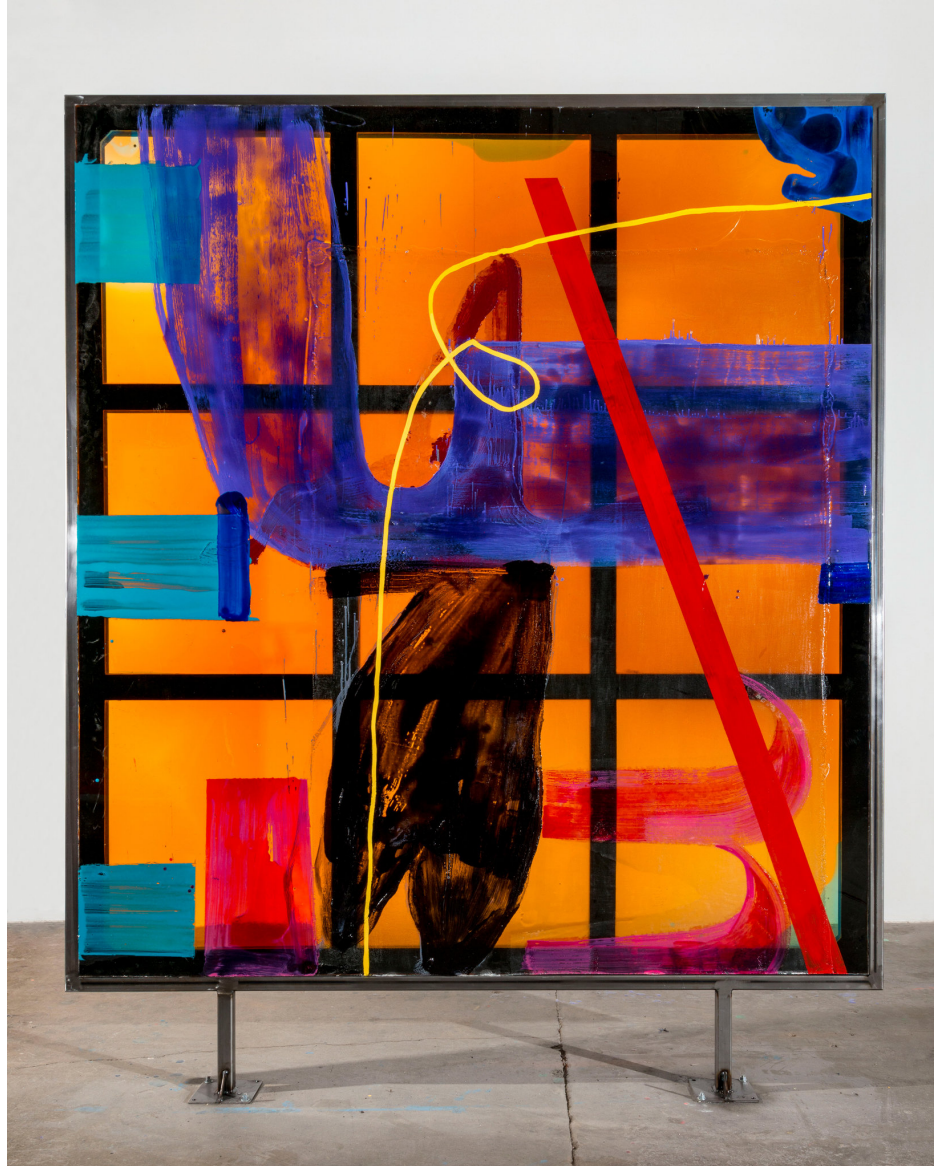


REGEN PROJECTS

Zara, Janelle. "Abstract Artworks with a Hint of Danger." T: The New York Times Style Magazine (September 18, 2015) [ill.] [online]

T THE NEW YORK TIMES STYLE MAGAZINE



Alex Hubbard's "[To be titled]," 2015, is among the works on display at the artist's show inaugurating the West Coast outpost of Maccarone gallery, which opens tomorrow. Courtesy of the artist and Maccarone, Los Angeles

"Everything I do is toxic," jokes the artist Alex Hubbard, as lacquer fumes waft through the vast expanses of his downtown Los Angeles studio. A layer of gloss adds the finishing touches to the pieces in his latest show, "Basic Perversions," paintings formed from pigmented industrial synthetics — urethane, resin and fiberglass — "all of which," Hubbard notes, "are hazardous to my health."

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On Saturday, "Basic Perversions" inaugurates Maccarone Los Angeles, the West Coast outpost of Michele Maccarone's West Village gallery operations. It joins Gavin Brown and Laura Owens's 356 Mission and Adam Lindemann's Venus Over Los Angeles in the increasingly New Yorker-populated L.A. Arts District, where postindustrial gallery space seems in endless supply. Maccarone's complex, a 50,000-square-foot onetime horsefeed production factory, includes a 7,000 square-foot in-house studio for Hubbard.

The space hasn't affected the scale of his works much — "I tried not to carry away with it," he says — but it did provide the added ventilation necessary to continue his experimentation with noxious chemicals, his means of translating his painterly vocabulary into different media. Early on, Hubbard applied fiberglass and resin directly to canvas, later introducing the "bent painting," the three-dimensional form of a painting cast in urethane and molded into sometimes freestanding sculptures, at Zurich's Galerie Eva Presenhuber in 2013.



"[To be titled]," 2015. Courtesy of the artist and Maccarone, Los Angeles

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For “Basic Perversions,” Hubbard casts various shades of urethane in the shape of the stretcher bars that typically hold the canvases of paintings taut. In lieu of canvas, the spaces between have been filled with layers of liquid chemicals that solidify at varying levels of transparency, sometimes as kaleidoscopic jewel tones. He plays with opacity, reintroducing oil and autobody paints into the composition.

The liquids harden at different rates, and sometimes ripple when they come in contact with each other. The unpredictability of the chemical reactions breeds new nuances into Hubbard’s practice. “I’m happiest when I have problems to deal with in my work,” he says. “I love the fight when things go wrong. If I have too much of an understanding of a material or a process or a way of thinking, you redo the same things, and it’s boring,” and yet some things remain the same. “No matter what obstacles I set up for myself,” he says, “you return subconsciously to these issues that come through your work. There’s a composition in there that I made in art school 20 years ago.”

“Basic Perversions” is on view Sept. 19 – Dec. 17 at Maccarone Los Angeles, 300 South Mission Road, maccarone.net.