

# BLUE PAINTINGS

Matt Mignanelli

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DENNY GALLERY NEW YORK



## SURFACE STORIES

Aaron Levi Garvey

*An ocean traveler has even more vividly the impression that the ocean is made of waves than that it is made of water.*

ARTHUR STANLEY EDDINGTON

Nuanced repetition and patterning are often overlooked in daily life. We find them in nature among foliage and flower petals, also in the manufactured horizontal lines of a rolling steel gate and diamond weaves in chain link fences. The beauty of simplicity serves as both aesthetically pleasing and utilitarian. There is something to be said for repetition and routine; some would say it's oppressive and confining, while others find comfort, order and limitless potential for inspiration and freedom: Matt Mignanelli's work falls into the latter. By distilling his palette to one or two colors and working with a stringent set of rules for mark making, he has been able to remove chaos from his studio in order to focus on the purest elements of his work.

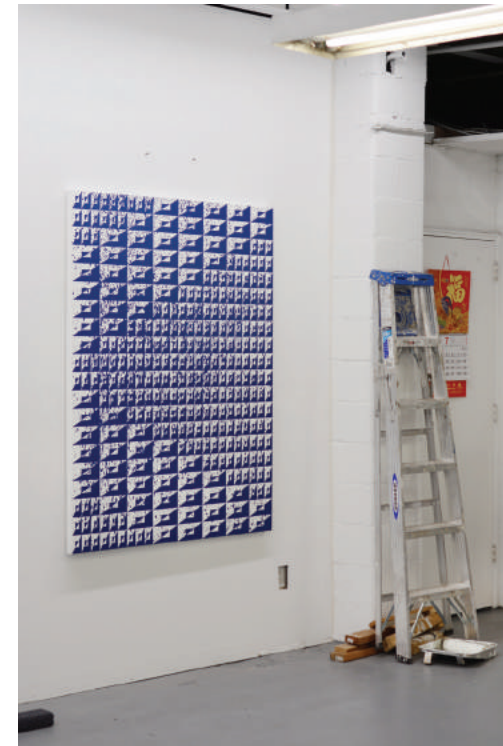
Mignanelli's work of a few years ago veered into obsession and ritual. His everyday surroundings: windows, fences, ledges, stair steps, diamond plating, train cars and rolling gates all became more noticeable, objects of equal fixation and inspiration for his paintings. Mignanelli's painting surfaces became more flat and flawless, meticulously primed, sanded, primed and sanded again, removing any sign of the artist's hand in the preparation phases of each piece. The visibility of his hand only revealed itself once the mark making began. Without stenciling, layer masking or technological assistance he began to put down monochromatic layers of enamel. It is obvious when looking at his works that his practice is heavily rooted in architecture. He imposed a set of rules for his palette that is directly correlated to that base inspiration. Skeletal metal structures, window reflections, drywall partitions and construction barriers set the framework; black, white, gray, and the eventual navy blue have been the palette for these color explorations.

Examinations in color as a subject also became a guiding principle throughout this body of work. By deconstructing and reconstructing the paintings, Mignanelli began to channel the legacies of Josef Albers and Barnett Newman. The works further took on the aesthetics of Bauhaus architecture as Mignanelli's unblemished and mechanical line work took shape. As these works progressed, becoming more intricate in depth and form, the artist used slight shifts of pigment gradations through the use of flat, semi-gloss and high gloss enamel to create visual motion.

During the creation of each piece, heavy consideration was (and still is) given to how it would transition into the next piece and how it evolved from its predecessor, with the intent of keeping a running dialog between the works. As he reached a level of comfort with his “formula,” the sizes of the canvases became standardized. Diptychs and triptychs started to appear more often and his signature square/rectangle combinations developed into recurring elements. Mignanelli delved into exploring ratios and probability shifts within the confines of these fundamental shapes.

The Nocturnes series is a slight departure from the controlled work of Mignanelli’s past oeuvre. Though this series of work began stringently and methodically, Mignanelli began to bend the rules ever so slightly with the incorporation of a thicker impasto of underpainting, departing from the pristine surfaces of a few years ago. The movement of water through curbs and alleys and the weathering of surfaces around public spaces are new sources of intrigue and exploration. The new paintings meld these motifs together with his signature elements in a harmonious balance; the square and rectangle combinations sit atop rigid and waved backgrounds. In addition to this change in substrate and background treatment, Mignanelli has introduced the element of chance into his practice. What started as a singular drop of paint as his brush crossed from the can to the canvas, he developed into an intentional application method. Similarly to Robert Motherwell’s process when creating his “Elegy” work, automatism and happenstance have played an integral role in counterbalancing his mechanical techniques. By placing his enamel cans slightly further away from reach while painting horizontally on his work table, Mignanelli has begun to allow drops of paint to build up as an intentional component of the process. Since allowing himself to enter a deeper meditative state during his process of applying paint to the canvas and refilling his brushes with color, he has been able to acquiesce on his initial set of rules in order to deliver this new body of paintings.

These splendid new works explore the stark contrast between the planned and orderly events of daily life and the journey through the subconscious when allowed to have singular moments to let go of order. The escape which these paintings represent is one that most all of us long for from time to time, a respite from the obligations of being on time or answering calls, texts and emails, the chance to listen to a score or gaze into the sky uninterrupted, so to take it all in. More than just paintings, they are surface studies for points in time that we all deserve.





*Nocturne*

2018

Enamel and acrylic on canvas  
54 x 72 inches (137.1 x 182.8 cm)



*A Lifting Force*

2018

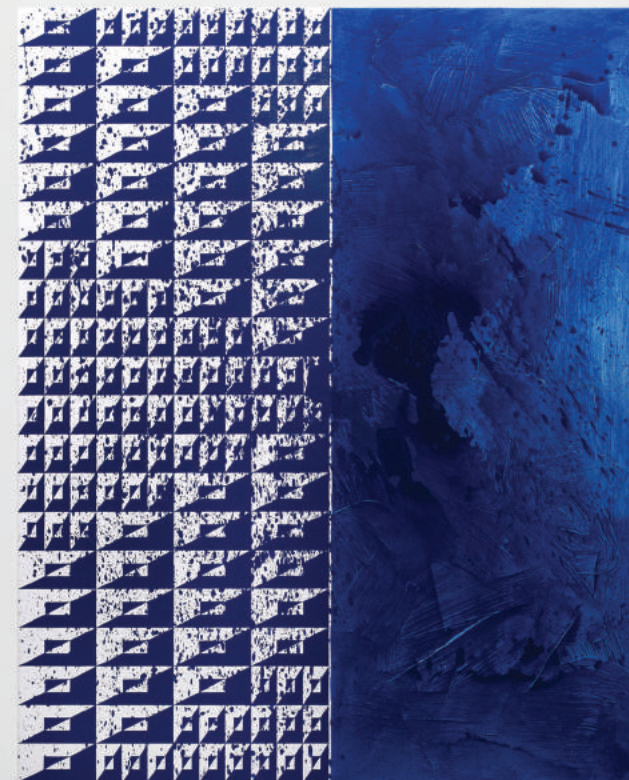
Enamel and acrylic on canvas  
60 x 48 inches (152.4 x 121.9 cm)



*Eastern Seaboard*

2018

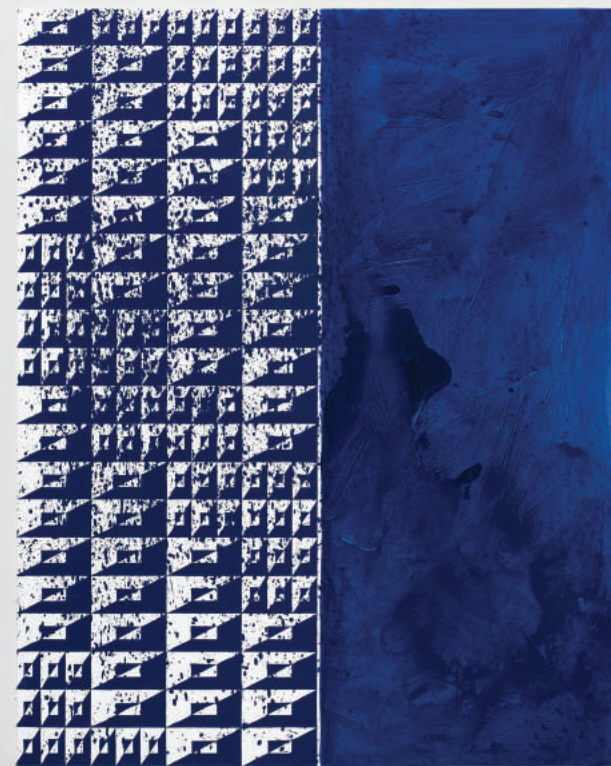
Enamel and acrylic on canvas  
60 x 48 inches (152.4 x 121.9 cm)



*Adrift*

2018

Enamel and acrylic on canvas  
60 x 48 inches (152.4 x 121.9 cm)

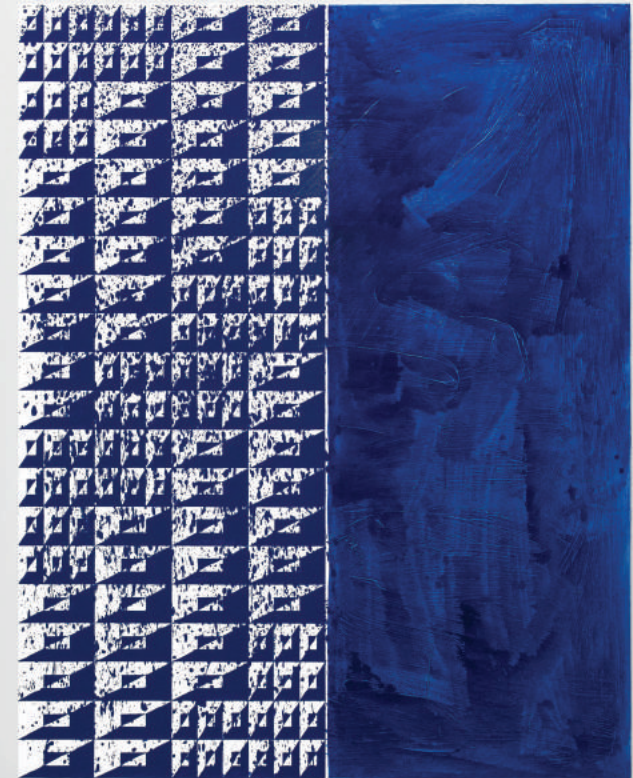




*Adrift II*

2018

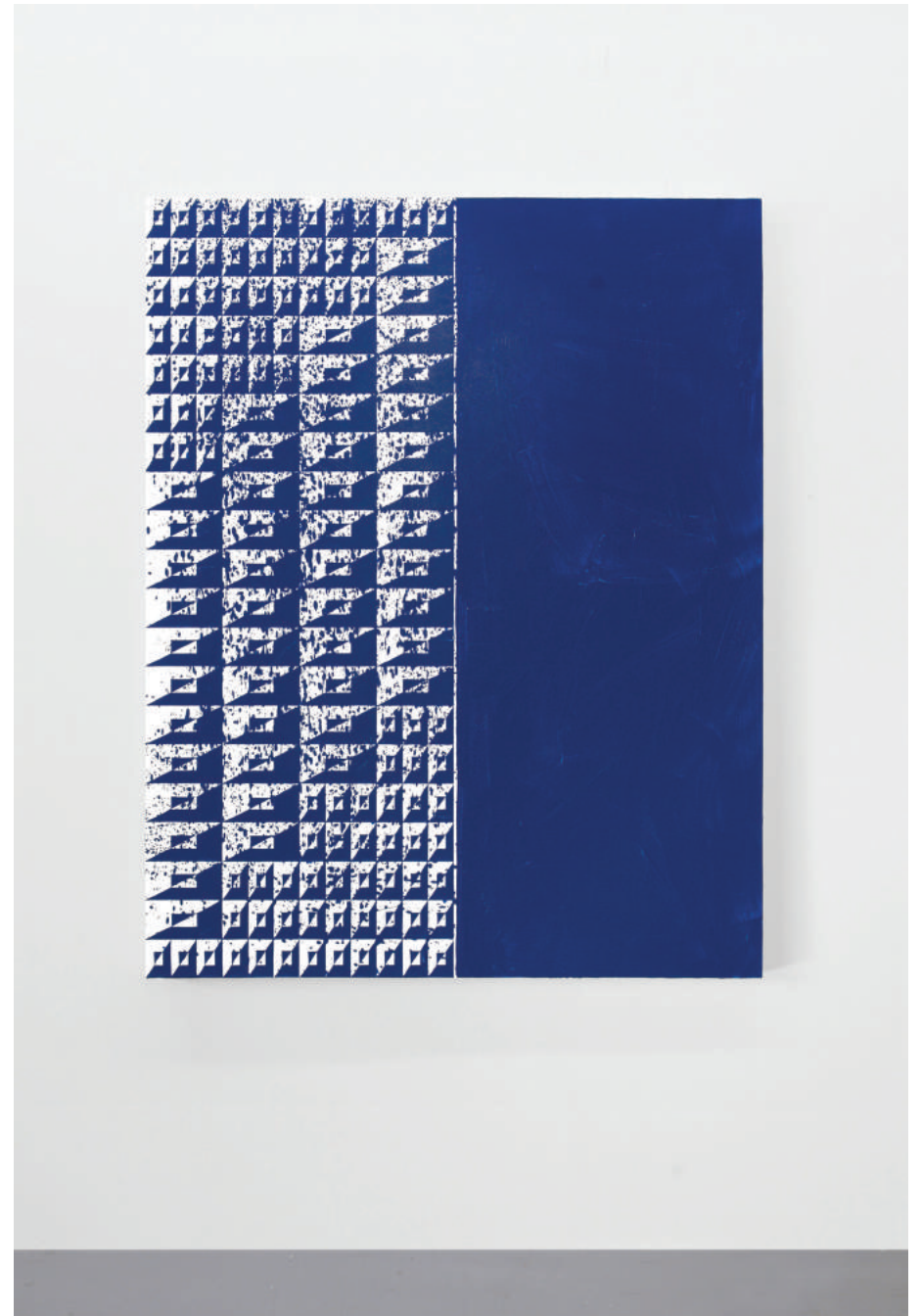
Enamel and acrylic on canvas  
60 x 48 inches (152.4 x 121.9 cm)



*Gradual Descent*

2018

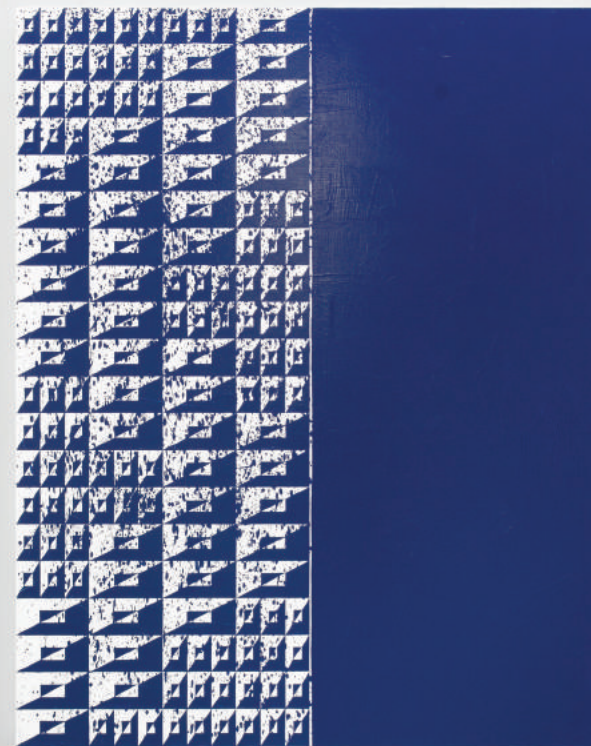
Enamel and acrylic on canvas  
60 x 48 inches (152.4 x 121.9 cm)



*Cyclical Rhythms*

2018

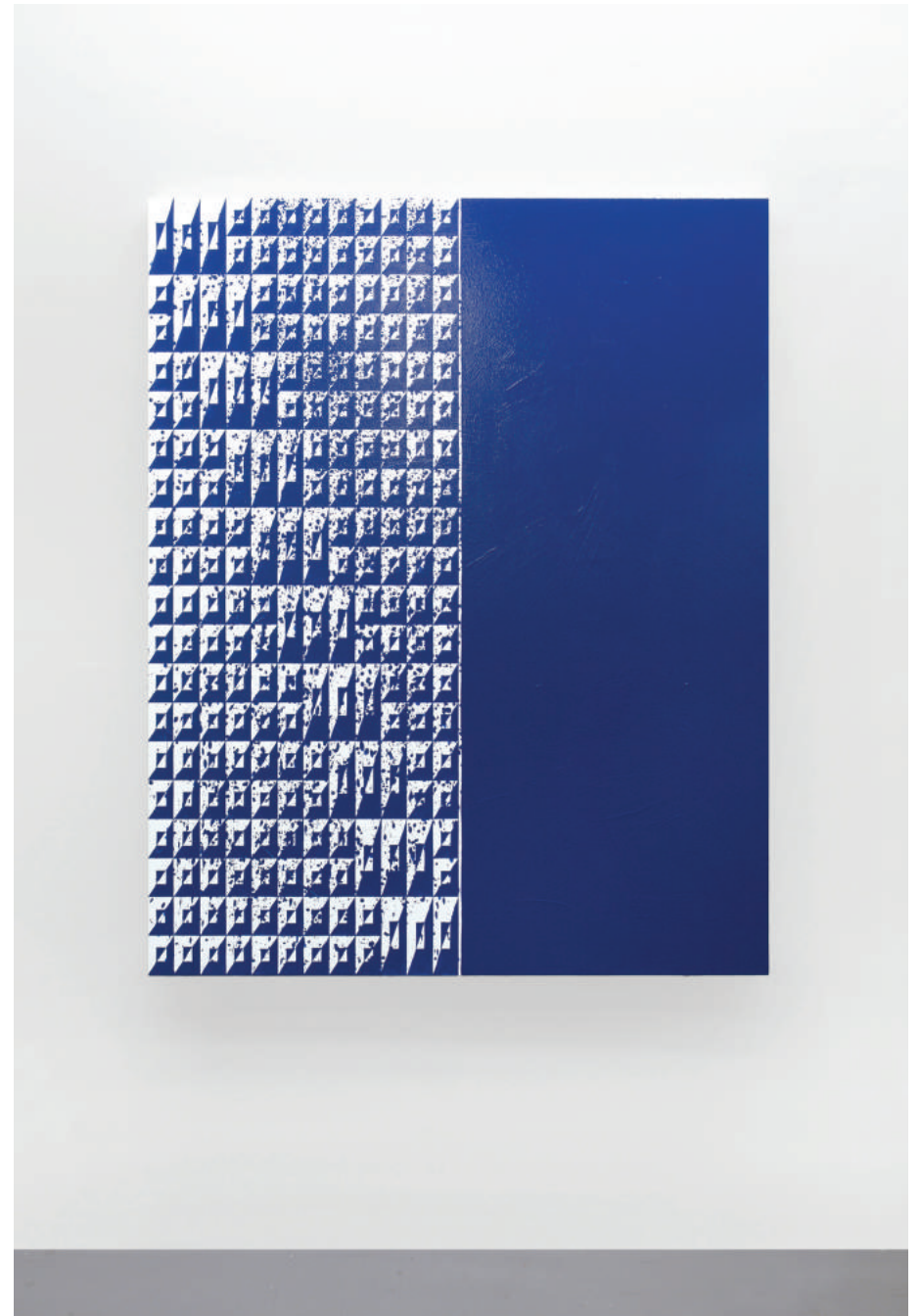
Enamel and acrylic on canvas  
60 x 48 inches (152.4 x 121.9 cm)



*Goodnight*

2017

Enamel and acrylic on canvas  
60 x 48 inches (152.4 x 121.9 cm)

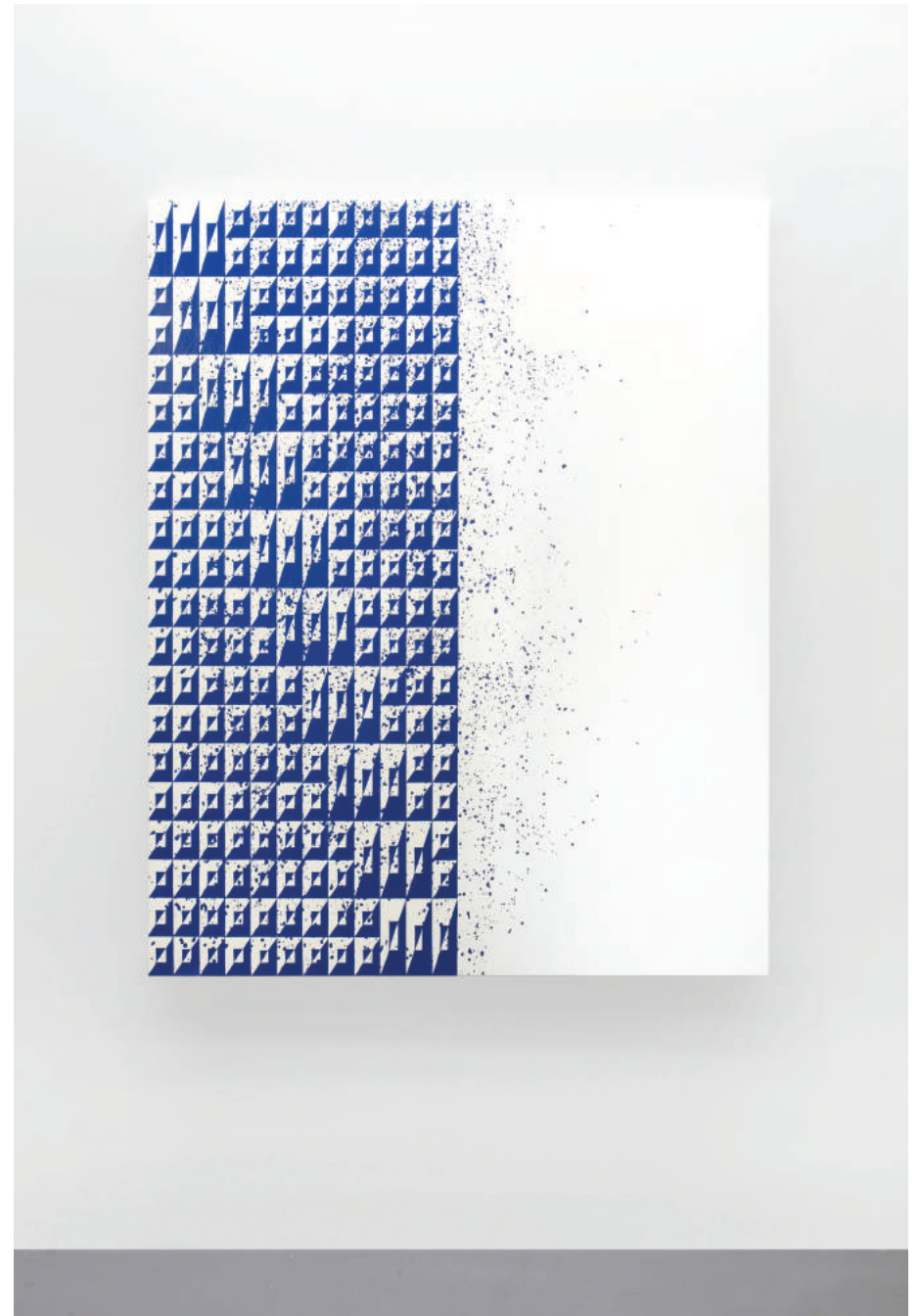




*Wild Field*

2017

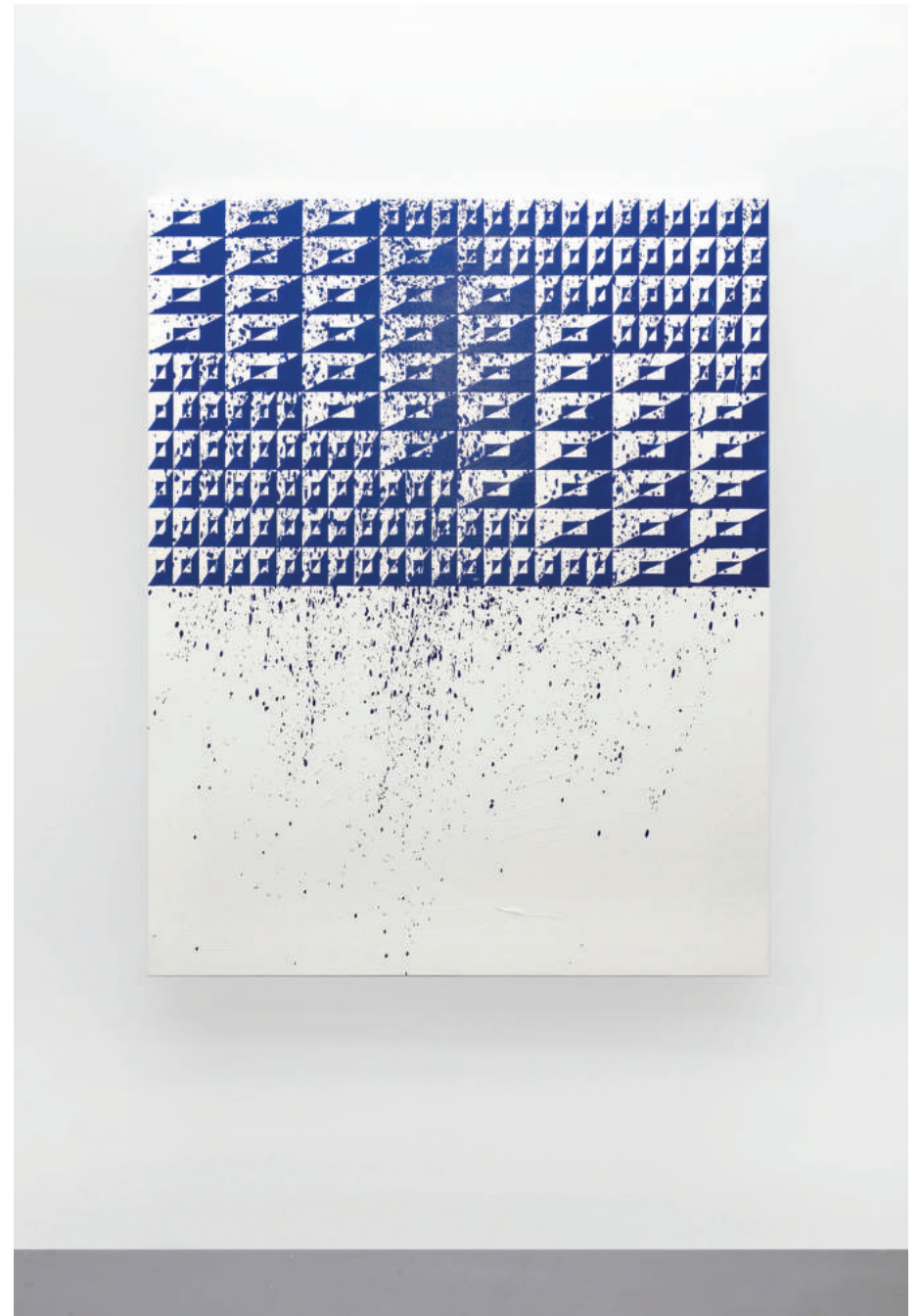
Enamel and acrylic on canvas  
60 x 48 inches (152.4 x 121.9 cm)



*Bask*

2017

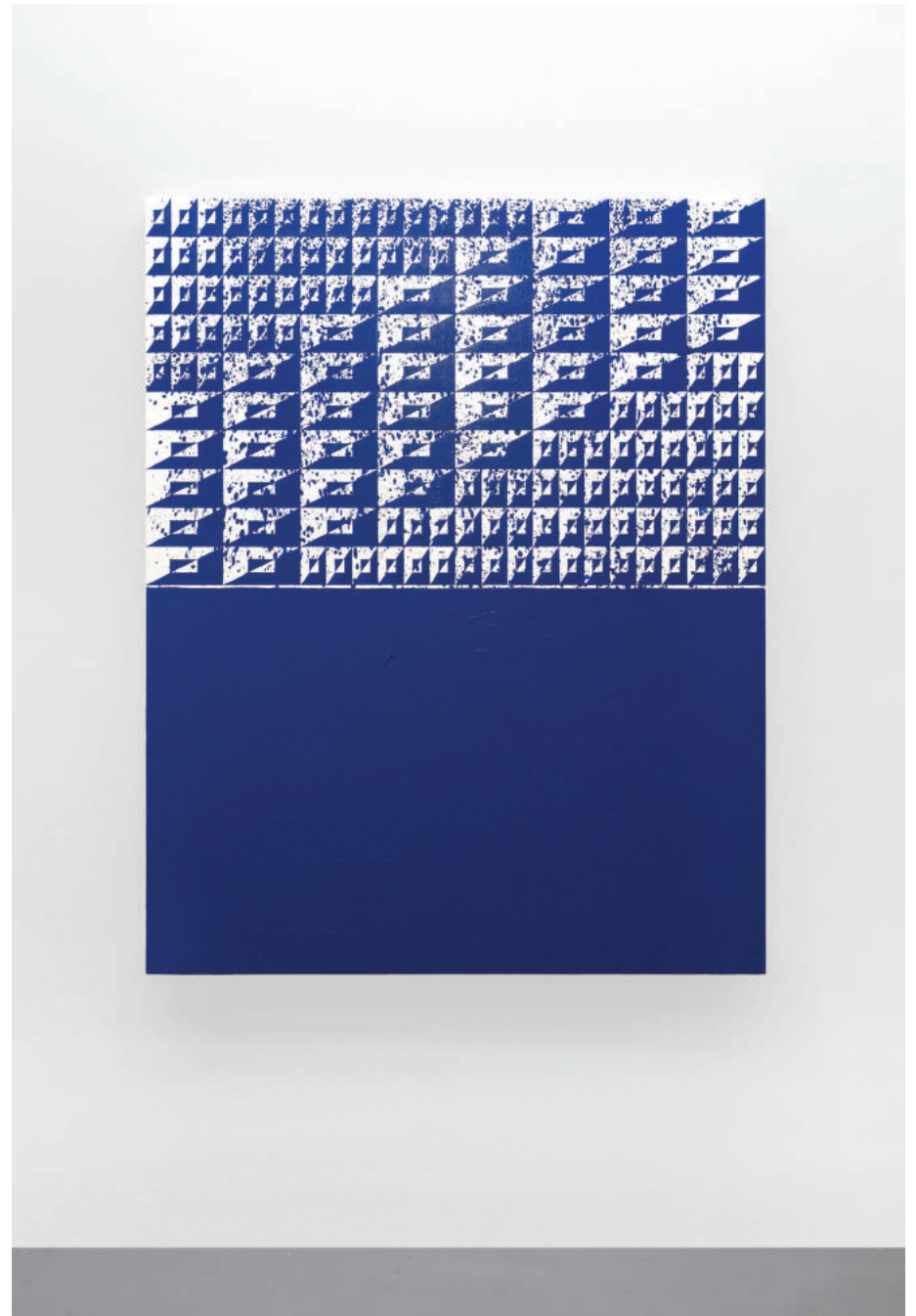
Enamel and acrylic on canvas  
60 x 48 inches (152.4 x 121.9 cm)



*Fathom*

2017

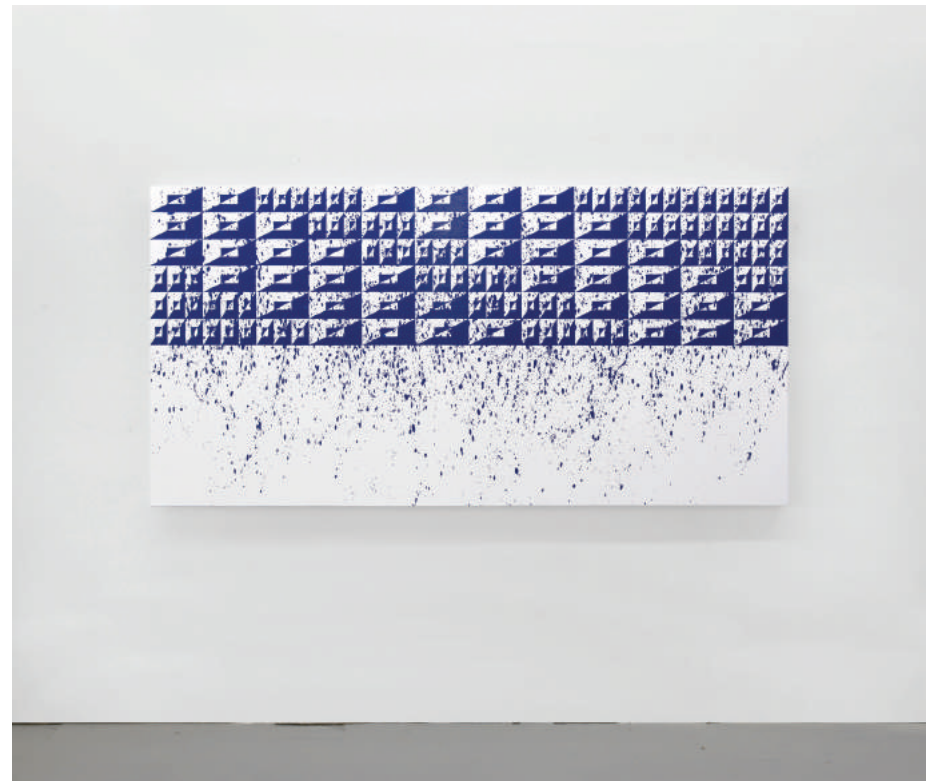
Enamel and acrylic on canvas  
60 x 48 inches (152.4 x 121.9 cm)



*High Winds*

2017

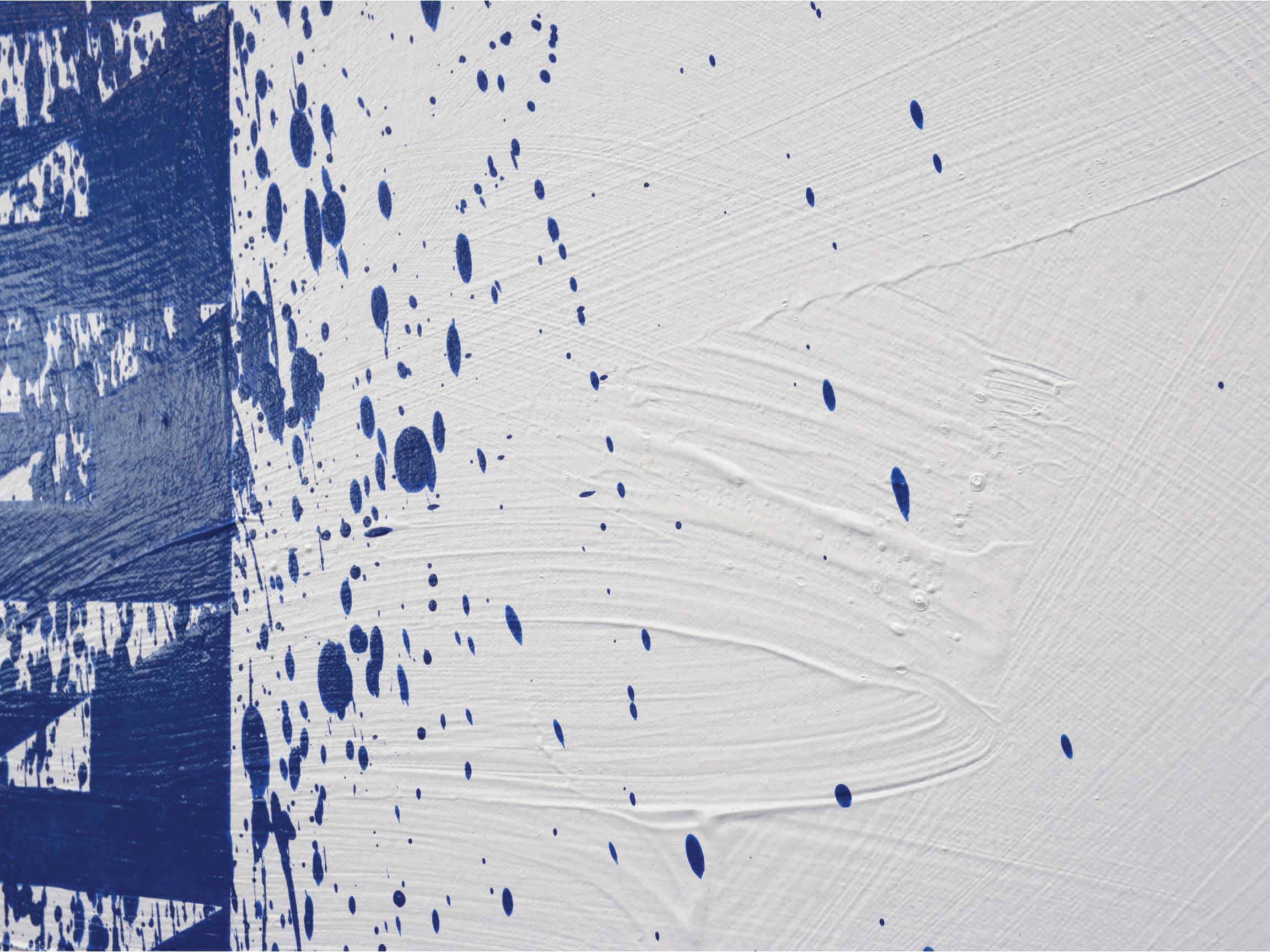
Enamel and acrylic on canvas  
36 x 72 inches (91.4 x 182.8 cm)









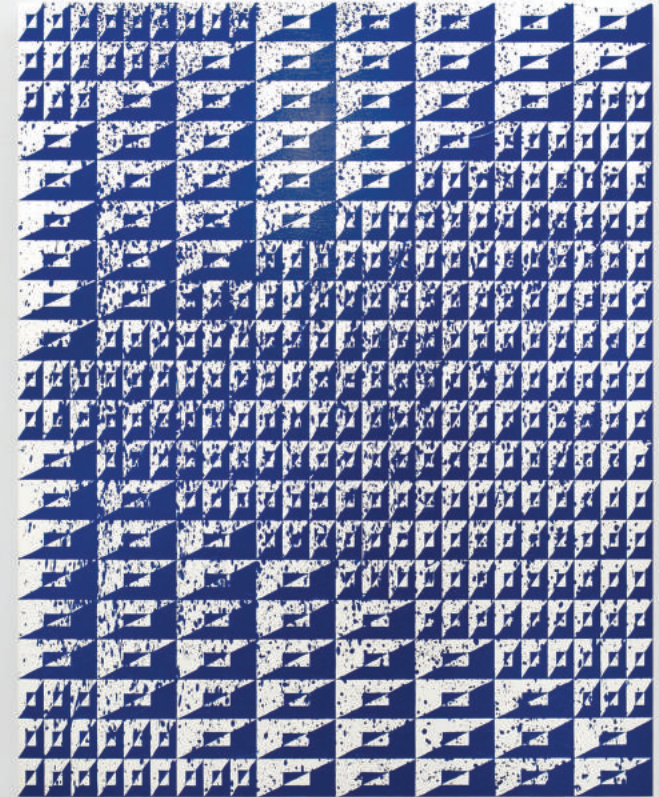




*Collision Course II*

2017

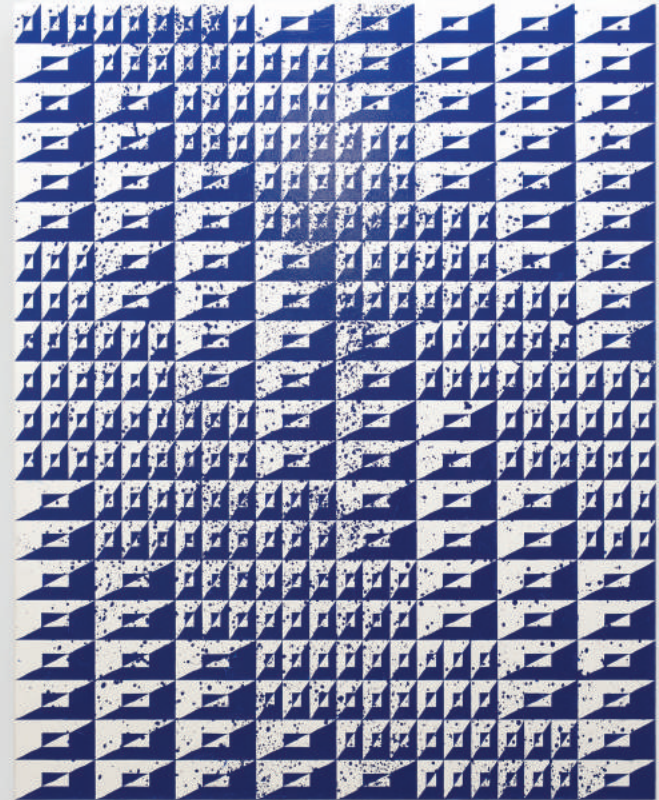
Enamel and acrylic on canvas  
60 x 48 inches (152.4 x 121.9 cm)



*Far Corner*

2017

Enamel and acrylic on canvas  
60 x 48 inches (152.4 x 121.9 cm)

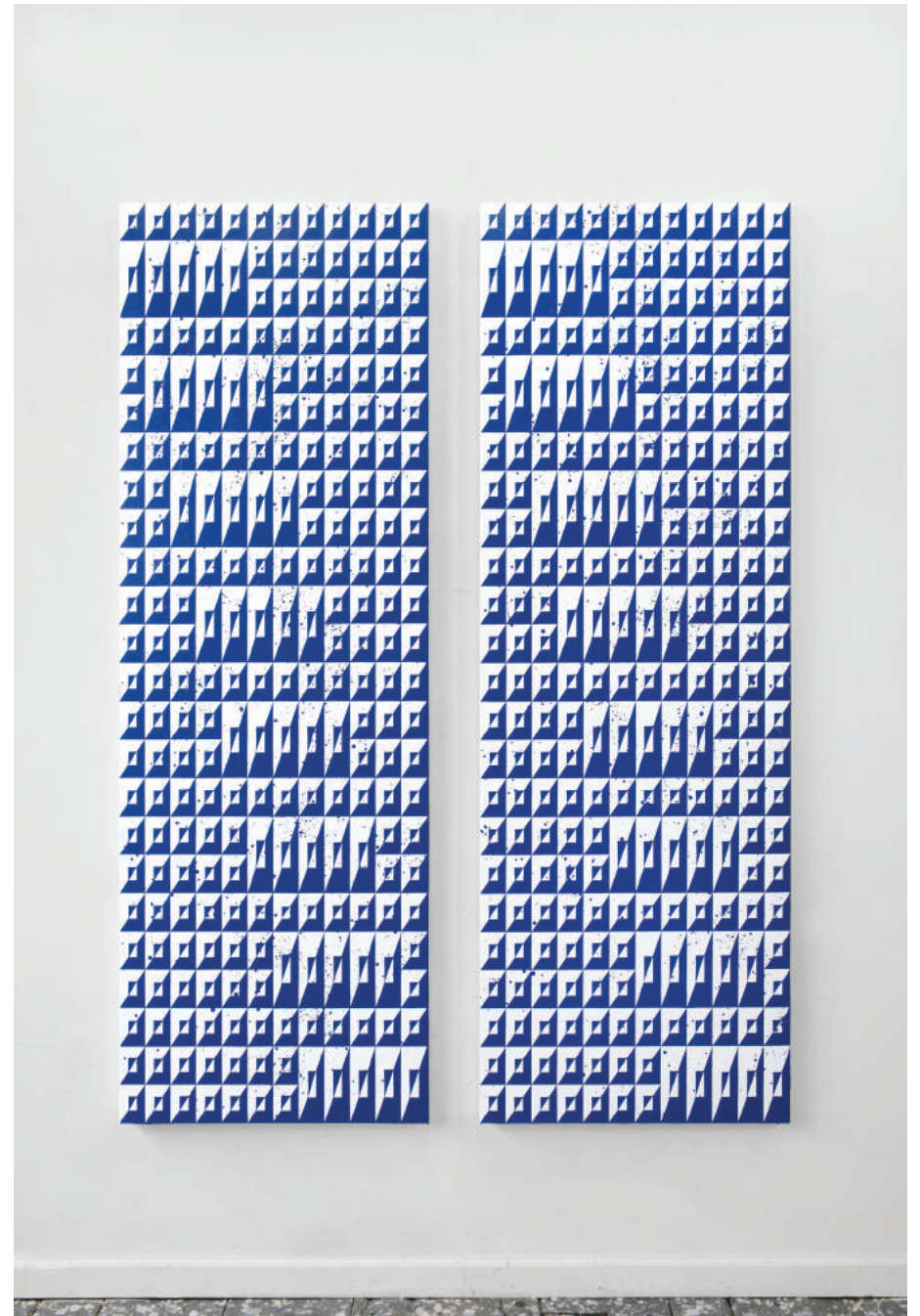




*Non Toccare*

2016

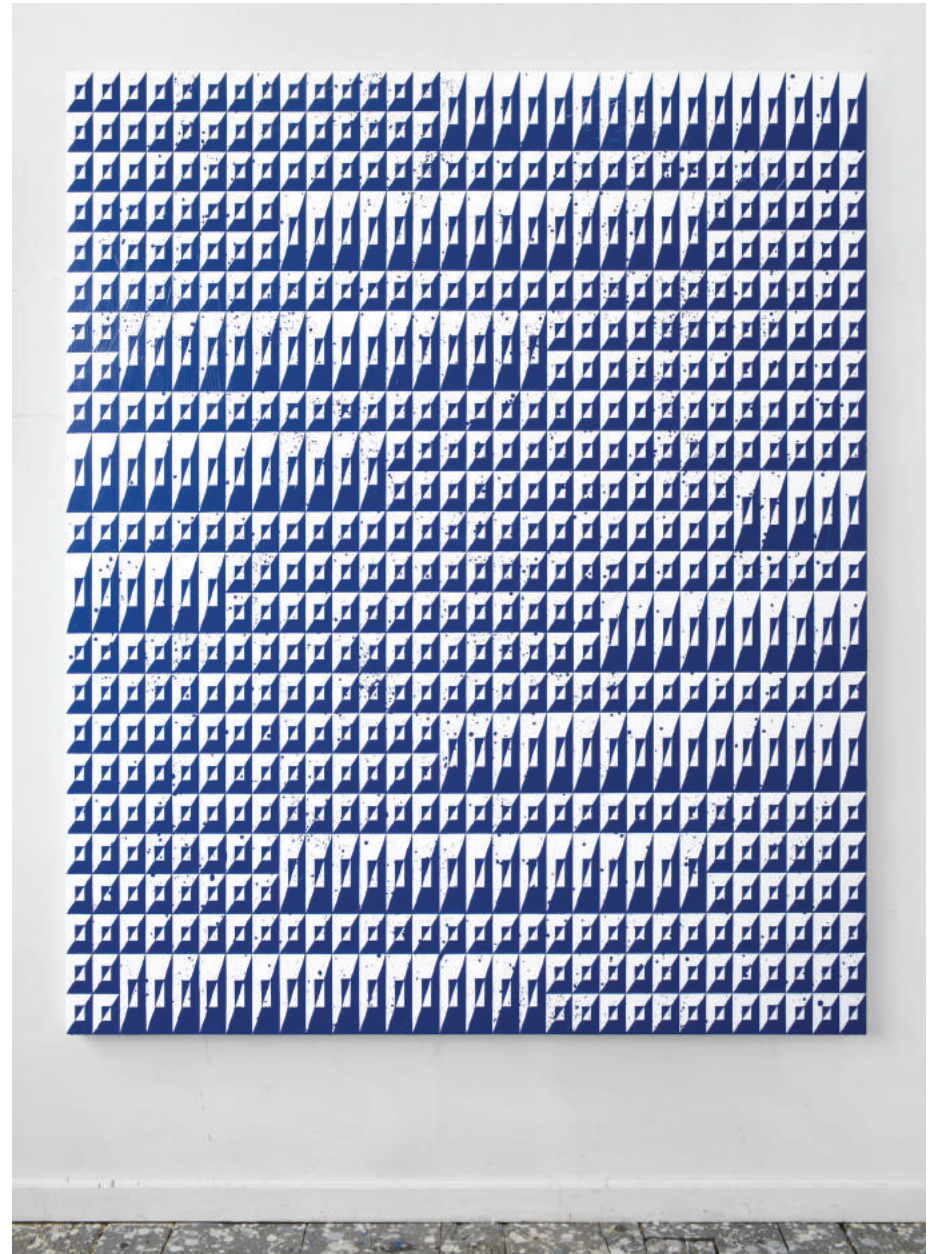
Enamel and acrylic on canvas  
Each 72 x 24 inches (182.8 x 60.9 cm)



*Blue in Green*

2016

Enamel and acrylic on canvas  
72 x 60 inches (182.8 x 152.4 cm)

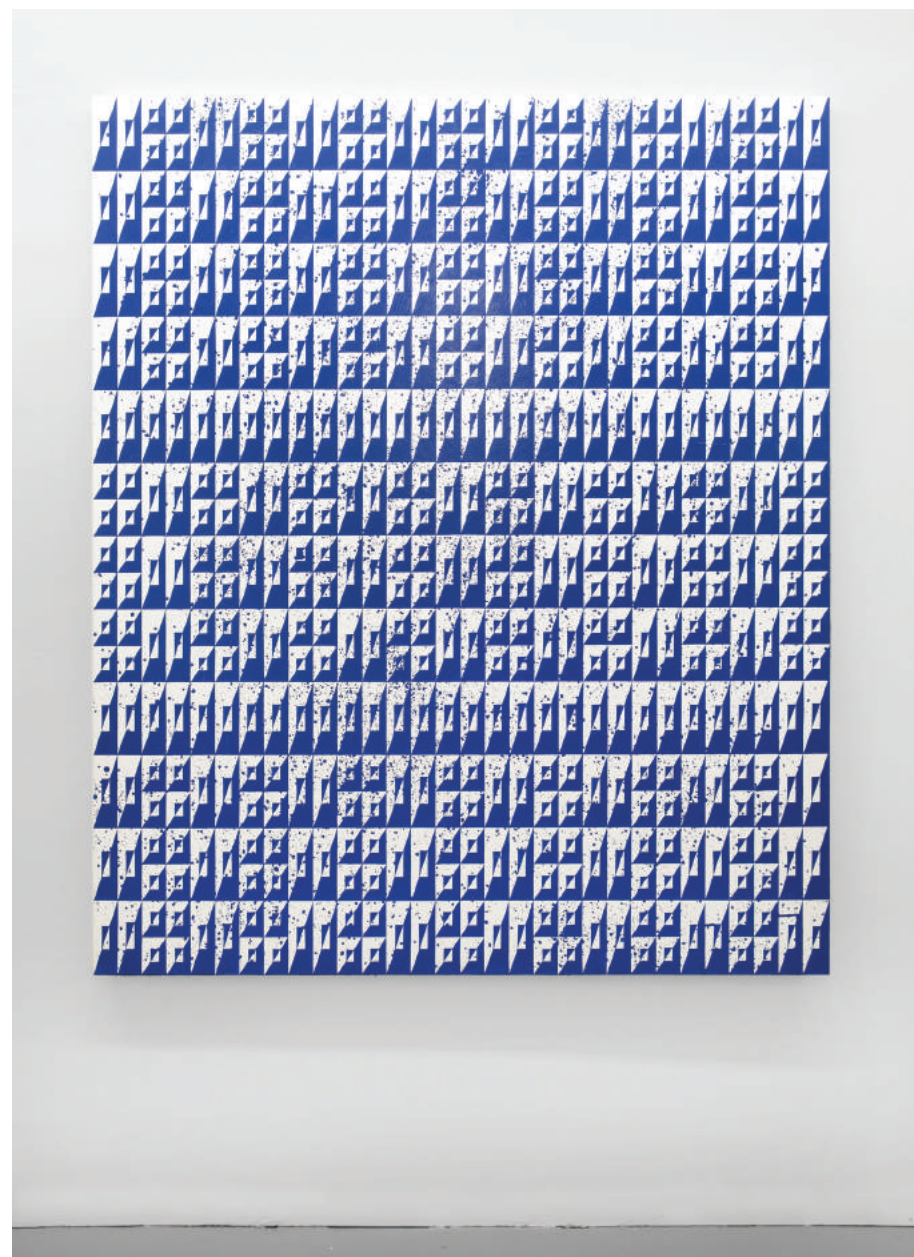




*Sideswipe*

2016

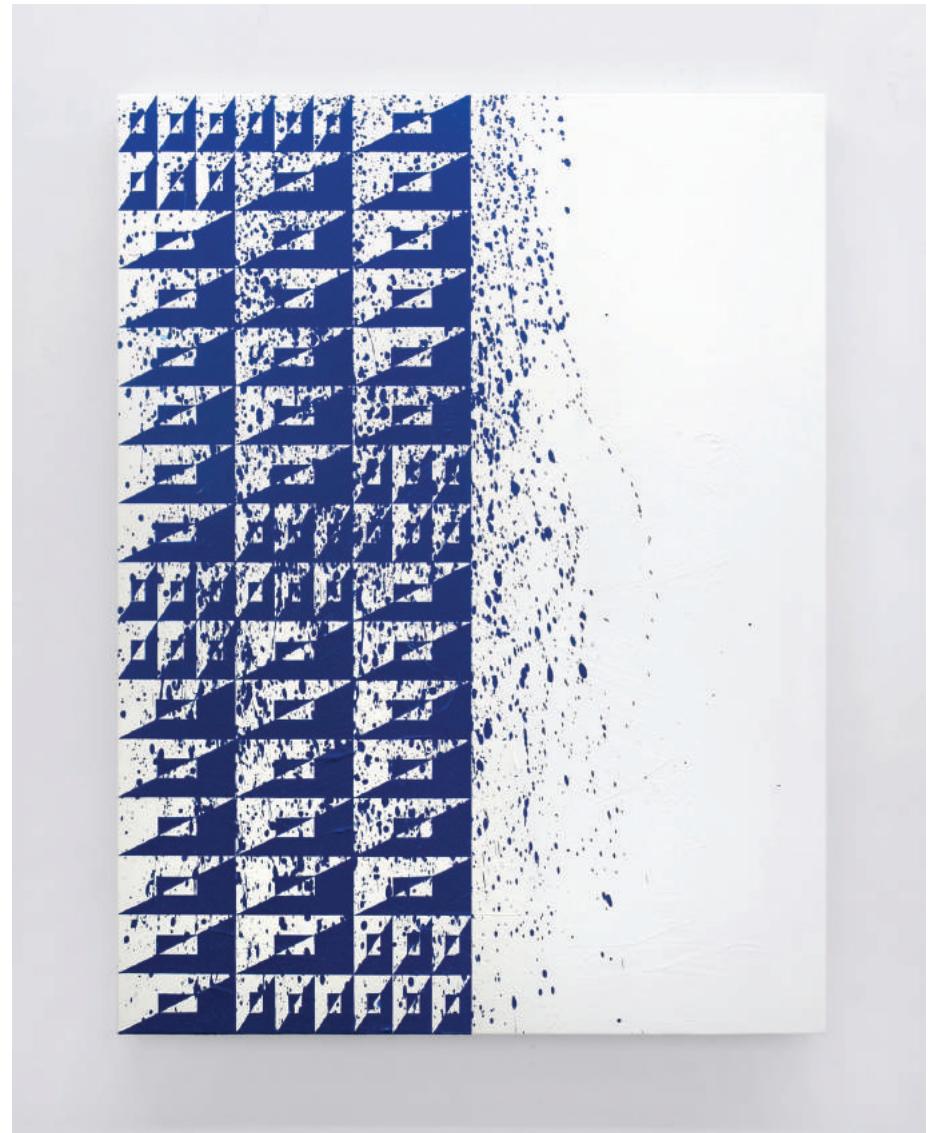
Enamel and acrylic on canvas  
72 x 60 inches (182.8 x 152.4 cm)



*Fleeting Moment*

2018

Enamel and acrylic on canvas  
48 x 36 inches (121.9 x 91.4 cm)

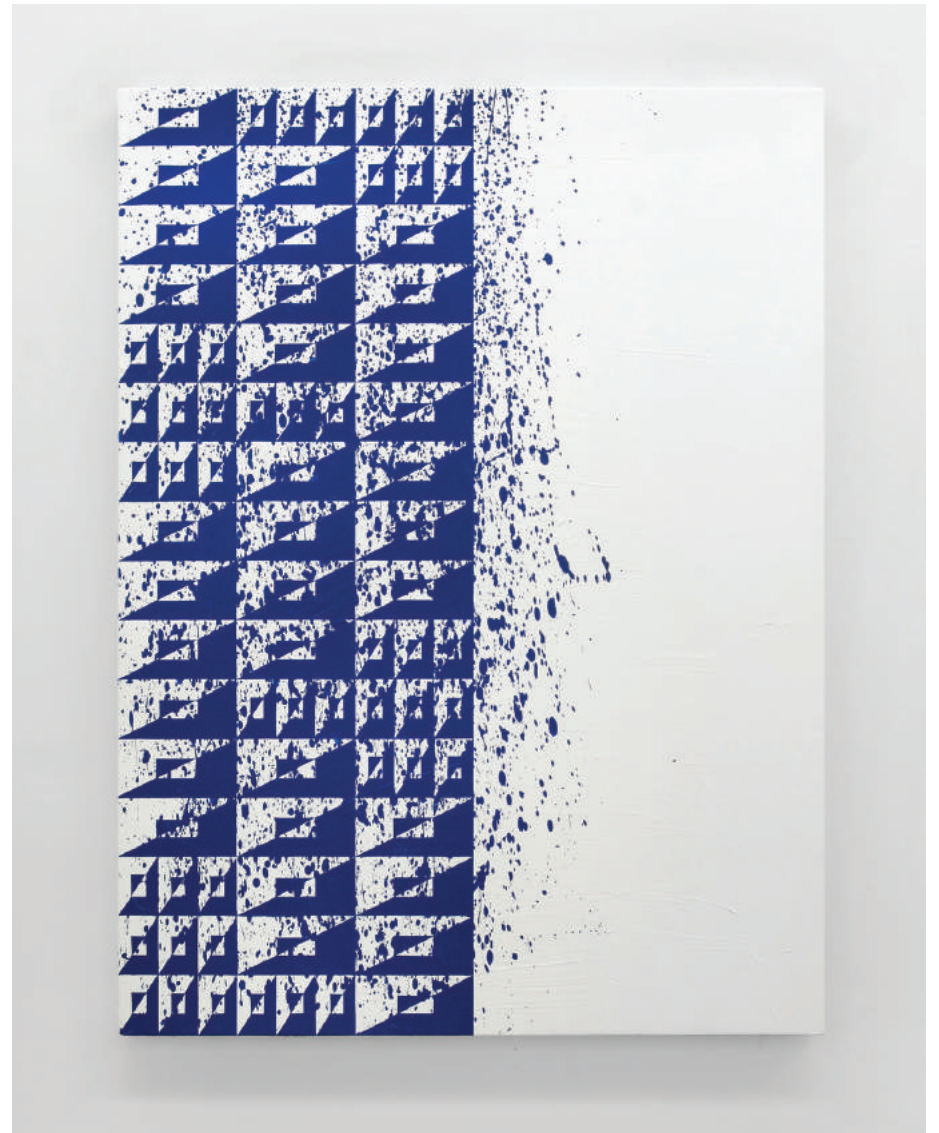




*Slayton Pasture*

2018

Enamel and acrylic on canvas  
48 x 36 inches (121.9 x 91.4 cm)



*Power Dynamics*

2018

Enamel and acrylic on canvas  
48 x 36 inches (121.9 x 91.4 cm)



*Menemsha Blues*

2018

Enamel and acrylic on canvas  
48 x 36 inches (121.9 x 91.4 cm)

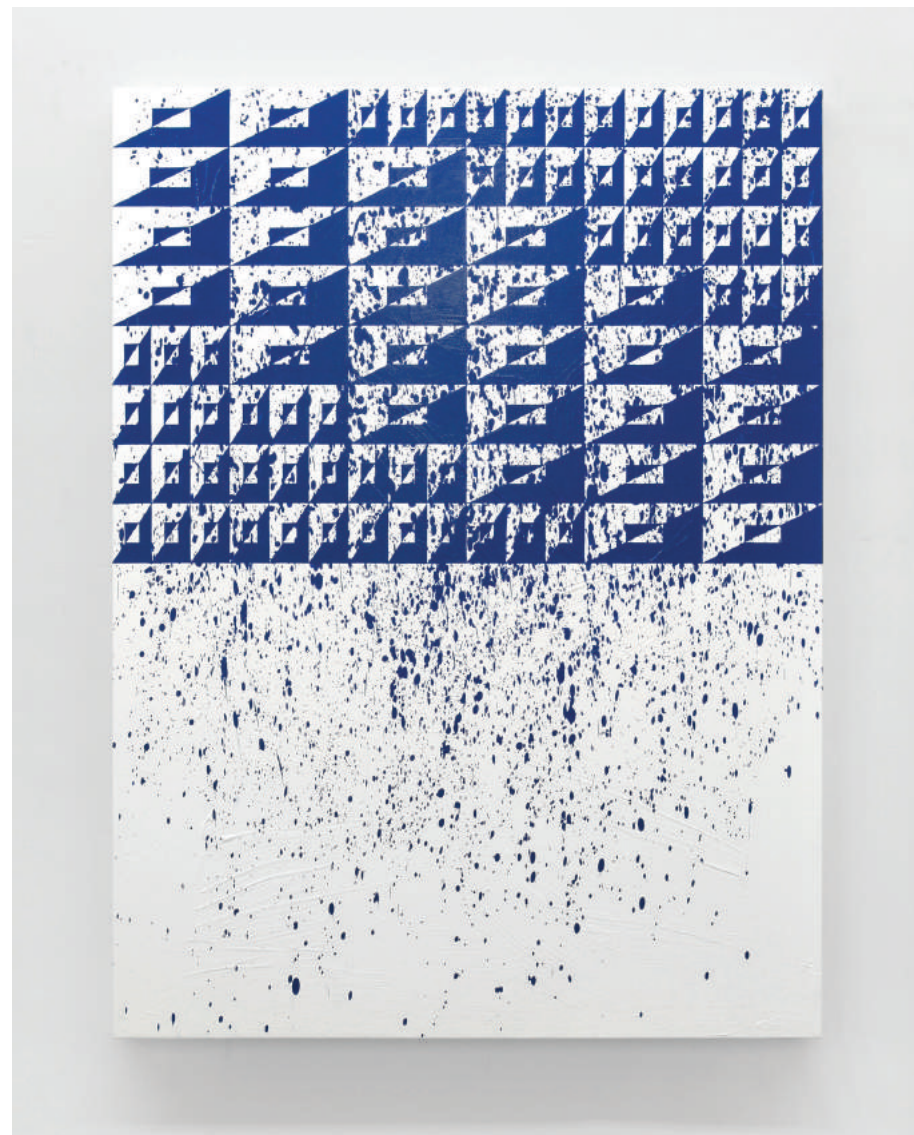




*Sunday Morning*

2018

Enamel and acrylic on canvas  
48 x 36 inches (121.9 x 91.4 cm)





*East River*

2018

Enamel and acrylic on canvas  
48 x 36 inches (121.9 x 91.4 cm)



Blue Paintings  
Matt Mignanelli

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Essay by Aaron Levi Garvey  
Designed by Adam Mignanelli

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