

**Tobin, Richard. “Gesture Then and Now: The Legacy of Abstract Expressionism.” *THE Magazine* April, 2014**

Few of the dozen or so artists in *Gesture Then and Now* would identify with the original AbEx aesthetic, apart from a stylistic resemblance stressed in the show’s reference to AbEx gesture. The “gesture” in the show’s title is shorthand for the term Action Painting, coined by Rosenberg to describe the calligraphic brushstrokes—and, by extension, the existential angst—of AbEx’s embryonic phase in the early 1940s. Action Painting was supplanted by the more art-historical “Abstract Expressionism,” embracing its later, color-field phase as well. Yet its characterization as gesture still captures the intensely personal and cryptic economy at the movement’s emotive core. As such, it is a helpful device to unify the gallery’s case for the AbEx legacy.

The show’s oil-on-canvas paintings from the late 1940s and 1950s demonstrate the wide reach of the New York School—works by Jack Jefferson, Deborah Remington, Ward Jackson, Louis Ribak, Lilly Fenichel, and Bea Mandelman—repeated here by the recent mythic narratives (2013) of Eugene Newmann. Phillis Ideal’s acrylic-on-canvas *Zowie* (2008-13) and her black-and white archival pigment prints recall Roy Lichtenstein’s large-scale *Big Painting* series of blown-up brushstrokes, a Pop tongue-in-cheek parody of AbEx bombast.

**Benson, Christopher. “Contemporary Masters” *THE Magazine* April, 2014**

But, if you still like art that isn't quite so caught up in the hunger for celebrity buzz and market success – that isn't embarrassed by a more soulful kind of questing -- there's a show across the street that merits a look. David Richard Gallery has put on a survey of some of the best of our elder local masters. These are contemporaries of the luminaries at Zane Bennett who migrated away from the urban art world around the same time that the superstars were building their reputations in its center. The main room features large-scale formalist abstractions by the late Taos painter Oli Sihvonen. It's surrounded by a group show of expressive abstractionists who came here from San Francisco, Chicago, New York, and elsewhere. These include Lilly Fenichel, Eugene Newmann, Phillis Ideal, and Paul Pascarella, among others.

The David Richard exhibition is a real painter's show. As such, it's carrying a bigger gun than the print work across the street. Even so, we know the paintings and prints of the Zane Bennett artists well enough by now that it still feels like an illuminating comparison in the broader philosophical context of art versus market. The crucial difference between the two exhibitions is that one contains minor works by major (or more successfully commoditized) artists, while the other offers major works by artists who are comparatively minor. I hope both painters and proprietors at David Richard will forgive my use of those qualifiers, because in this context it refers only to fame. For my money, theirs is a more genuinely masterful kind of art than was made by some of their most

celebrated contemporaries.

Associated Artists:  
Lilly Fenichel  
Phillis Ideal  
Eugene Newmann

**Abatermarco, Michael. “Range of Motion” *Pasatiempo, New Mexico Magazine* February, 2014**

When it comes to Abstract Expressionism, formal qualities such as brushwork, color relationships, and composition take precedence over representation. Gesture itself — which can encompass the sweep or movement of a line or mark, its curve, and its length — is one of Abstract Expressionism’s hallmarks. But what exactly do we mean when we say that a work of art is gestural? The term is not so easy to define. To say that art is gestural might imply that it has an impromptu quality, or that the marks on the canvas are emotive, or that the manner of applying the paint is reflected in the finished product — with the physical act of painting itself being the gesture. David Richard Gallery tackles these thorny topics in the exhibit *Gesture Then and Now: The Legacy of Abstract Expressionism*. The exhibit, along with a panel discussion on Saturday, Feb. 8, is part of the *Art Matters: Collections* series of events sponsored by the Santa Fe Gallery Association.

When it comes to bold, dynamic gestures in art, Ideal, who titles many paintings with verbs such as flutter, chatter, and ignite, emphasizes movement and emotional qualities in her work. Her *Zowie* features a vibrant red burst of color that seems to jump from the canvas, a writhing form counterbalanced by more somber colors and some hard-edged work. Together, these elements convey an idea of excitement or surprise. “These big brush strokes I did with a broom,” she said. “It’s very mixed media. There’s computer-generated material. There’s collage. The whole thing is somewhat sealed with resin that I sanded. It’s an additive process, like any kind of abstract painting, where you’re jabbing at the canvas here and there and adding things to it. It speaks to all the possibilities of abstraction.”

The gallery also features a selection of images Ideal made using an app on her iPhone. “They’re inkjet, archival paper,” she said. “I liked the idea of making a big gesture with just my finger on the iPhone. Then I printed them. The title of the show is *Gesture Then and Now*, and I thought these were very now, using a contemporary device.” The iPhone images are at once photographic and painterly, black-and-white abstractions that contrast with the spirited use of color in her paintings. “I think these have human emotional qualities in them,” she said. “I see them as big feelings, big gestures. The big gesture is the subject.”