

shadows around it, optically engaging the gallery walls. The paintings are reactive, not meant to be looked at so much as looked through.

Many of these changes started to appear in Hutchison's work while she was working with images of Hurricane Katrina fresh in her mind. Like many worldwide, she was deeply affected by the extreme brutality of the natural force while drawn to its innate beauty. The "Night Clear as the Day" exhibition is an ode to that conflict, an attempt to acknowledge the devastating beauty through paint.

Although its economy of means is more reminiscent of the LA Light and Space movement, this body of work is Romantic at its core. The sense of wonder it evokes is akin to more grandiose predecessors, 19th Century painters such as Caspar David Freidrich and Albert Bierstadt. Admiration tinged with fear is ever-present in their sublime vistas. The natural wonders they reveal are underscored by man's miniscule role in the machinations of the earth, a humbling yet spiritual experience. Throughout Heather Hutchison's work, we find a similar Emersonian belief in transcendence.

I was reminded of the literary connections when I asked her about the naming of the work. She confessed that the titles were borrowed from poetry. After the paintings are complete she sits down in front of them with a pile of books, reading until a phrase resonates. The process strikes me as a perfect example of the directed intuitiveness that drives this work. After meeting with Heather Hutchison, I am also struck by how much of the artist is contained within these seemingly reductive paintings. Both reflect an intensity that is without pretension, a genuine openness. In this body of work, Heather Hutchison invites a more active perception, one that takes places outside of explanation.

If Heather Hutchison's paintings are impossible to experience through reproductions, they are equally difficult to capture through words. These I will borrow from the artist; "since their creation was not driven by conceptualization but by instinct, what I can say about them is only a fragment of what they are."

