

Even if it's a stretch to argue that Ault's paintings fully embody the mood of 1940s America, this worthy exhibition includes plenty of compelling works from an enormously complex decade.

—Rex Weil

UP NOW

'20 Years, 20 Artists'

Ralls Collection

Washington, D.C.

Through August 27

This 20th anniversary exhibition, a selection of works by 20 of Martha Ralls's favorite artists, spotlights the distinctive niche she has carved out in the burgeoning Washington, D.C., art scene.

While the show includes several representational works, such as William Dunlap's paintings of groups of cavorting hounds and Michael Kenna's crisp, carefully composed black-and-white photographs of landscapes in far-flung geographic locations like the Gulf of Finland and the Moroccan Sahara, most of the art on view is abstract.

Three paintings in oil or acrylic deserve special attention: David Richardson's *R No. 14* (2010), a boldly rendered red cross hovering above a large red circle; Mira Hecht's *Sensation* (2010), a deftly arranged abstraction of overlapping circles that range from opaque to translucent, and Su Kwak's *Sun Within* (2010), which is animated by dramatic, swooping slashes of impastoed white. Richard Serra's "Venice Notebook," a series of etchings depicting black circular forms that resemble ripples of water, recalls Venetian waterways.

The influence of Abstract Expression-

ism is most evident in Caio Fonseca's mixed media on canvas *Pietrasanta Painting Co6.54*

(2010), in which the seemingly random placement of small white squares and flecks of white paint on a rich black background gives the work a ruminative, nocturnal feel, and in John

Blee's acrylic on canvas *Orchard Mist* (2010), a pastel-hued arrangement of blocks of blues, greens, pinks, and reds.

Best in show is a toss-up between Dana Volkert's ambitious and striking *Abstracts* (2010), a grid of 15 tightly hung panels covered in colorful swirls of enamel, and James F. Dicke II's *Untitled #32* (2010), a large, beautifully composed mixed-media canvas in which converging multicolored shards draw the viewer into a central vortex.

This is a solid, appealing, and esthetically satisfying exhibition of works from a stable of gifted artists. —Stephen May

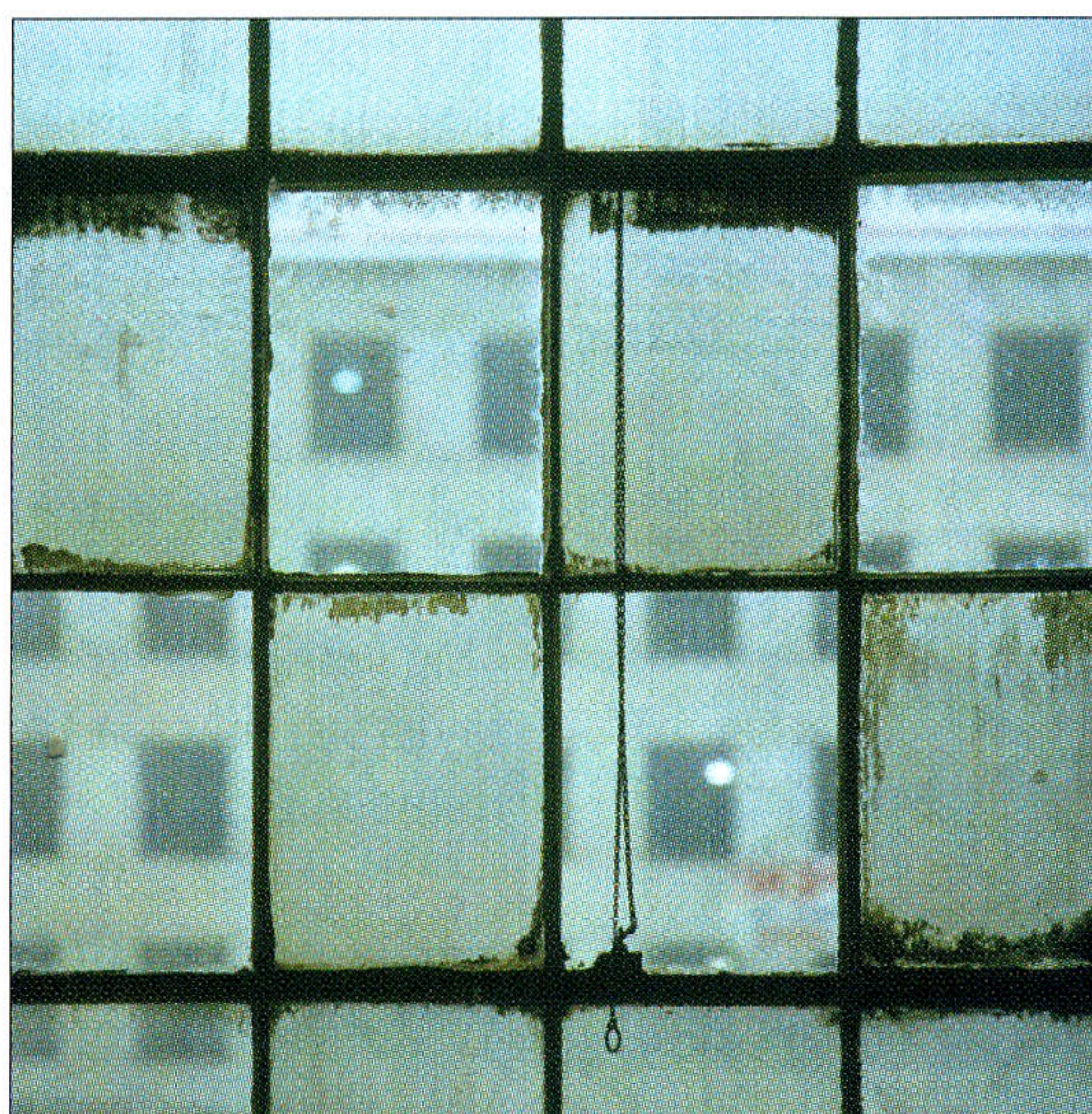
Michael Eastman

dj

Santa Monica

In his latest body of work, Michael Eastman uses a newly developed medium, the plexagraph, to examine how photographs serve as metaphorical windows. The artist won't divulge exactly how these works are made, but the patent-pending technique involves the combination of Plexiglas and a printed, photographic image to create a mildly three-dimensional effect. The added dimensionality gives Eastman's meditative images of actual windows an eerie, almost liquid quality.

This exhibition consisted of 18 plexagraphs, including four smaller works in which different architectural elements and signage are combined to collagelike effect. Most of the pieces depict views of buildings seen through the panes of warehouse windows. The crisp, dark edges of the panes—which create stark grids reminiscent of geometric abstrac-



Michael Eastman, *GW 5*, plexagraph, 2010, 30" x 30".

dj.

tion—appear to flicker and blur as the gallery lights hit the surface of the Plexiglas. The results look almost hand-painted, like Mondrian interpreted by Franz Kline. Hazy views of the buildings are framed by the lines of the grid, forming synco-pated rhythms across panes of varying translu-

cency. In these works, Eastman has turned an image of a window into a kind of window itself.

The show's standout was *Torn Windows* (2010), an image that, on first glance, looks like a conventional photograph of the interior of a warehouse reflected in a broken mirror. However, the relationship between the room and the mirror doesn't seem quite right, and closer inspection reveals that the space is not real, but has been fabricated from a near-seamless layering of multiple images. It's a deftly executed illusion, one that invests a seemingly quotidian photograph with subtle transporting potential.

—Sharon Mizota

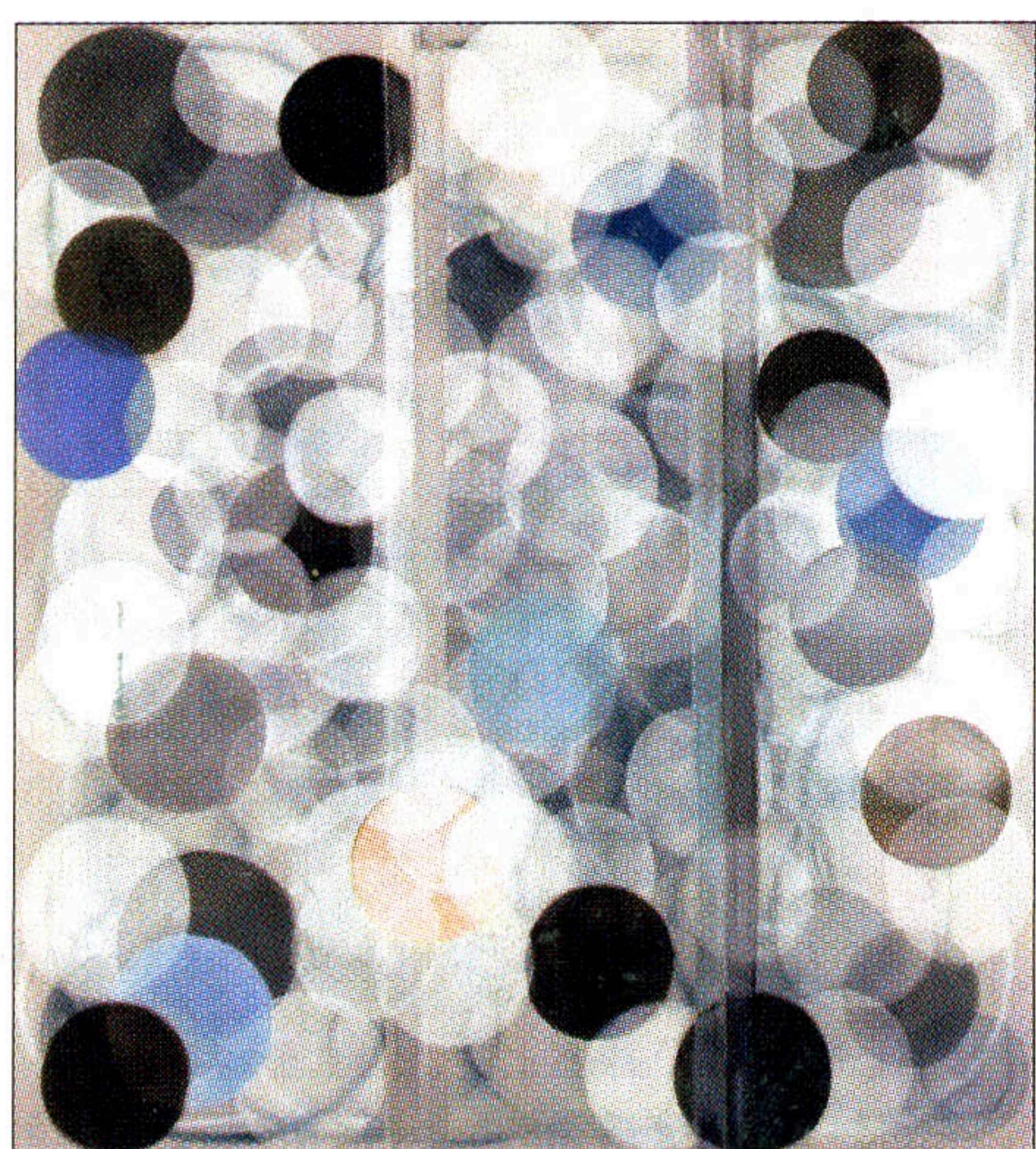
D*Face

Corey Helford

Culver City, California

English street artist D*Face, also known as Dean Stockton, is fascinated by America's obsessions with celebrity, vandalism, and death. "Going Nowhere Fast," a macabre, witty exhibition of recent works, opened with *Hollywood Skull Pile* (2011), a framed diorama featuring a charred "Hollywood" sign atop a pile of tiny handmade ceramic skulls. The dark, pop-gothic feel of the work—what the tongue-in-cheek D*Face has called "aPOPcalyptic"—set the tone for the show.

Drowning in Sorrow (2011) and *The Kiss of Death* (2011), two acrylic-on-linen works done in a comic-strip style appropriated from Roy Lichtenstein, depict a skeletal Ken kissing a zombie Barbie. In *Never Liked What You Did Anyways* (2011), another Lichtenstein-



Mira Hecht, *Sensation*, 2010, oil on panel, 39½" x 36".
Ralls Collection.