

GERING & LÓPEZ GALLERY

The Washington Post

MICHAEL BEVILACQUA

Last summer, Randall Scott presented a group show that included Michael Bevilacqua's black-and-silver paintings with references to Joy Division, the late-1970s post-punk band. The same motifs return in a few pieces in "Deciphering Scars," Bevilacqua's show at Scott's new H street NE space. But the New York artist has some new inspirations, notably Grimes, the Canadian electro-pop performer whose scrawled name doesn't quite fit onto one of these canvases. All that can be read is "grim," which these paintings are not. Although Bevilacqua's works aren't figurative, neither are they fully abstract. They incorporate text, recognizable forms and even the occasional art-history reference: "Malevich Has Left the Building" riffs on the Russian Suprematist's heavy black forms. These paintings appear weathered, as if modeled on the frayed posters, battered facades and half-erased graffiti that line city streets. The artist still sometimes paints words on the canvas, but now he also incises them into the pigment, carving "heaven" or "dream lover" amid more random scratches. The rawness can be offset by bright colors, as in "A.M./after modernism," with its fuchsia scribbles atop black and bold amber, or the pink-accented "Cypress," which suggests a roughed-up Washington Color School painting. Bevilacqua's style still draws from Joy Division's adolescent gloom, but it's taken a turn toward beauty.

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