

# EYEBROW HAIRCUT

ANDERS OINONEN



ant<sup>e</sup>ism

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Eyebrow Haircut



# FRAIL MONUMENTS

By *Howie Tsui*

At a recent nosebleed-y hoops experience between the Raps & the Nets, I killed some time during a t-shirt gun intermission by taking a face-swap photo of my pals Anders and Susy. The gut-busting thing about the picture is Anders had intentionally averted his eyes sharply away from the camera and into the arena's void, knowing full well that once the phone app switched their faces, his eyes would be staring, rather dementedly, at Susy. This instinctually impish gesture is echoed in the approach of Oinonen's paintings, where googly-ass eyes are used to great effect to derisively undermine the pomp of modern painting. But I must digress, as it is not within my wheelhouse to wax theoretic on the relative positioning of Oinonen's work within the vaulted discourse of the painting tradition. It might, however, prove more fruitful (less pretentio) to interpret the works in "Eyebrow Haircut" through the lens of a dilettante.

Has anyone witnessed objectivity decapitated by the nostalgic boomerang of a shared adolescence? If not, please read further, as any attempt to address Oinonen's work with impartiality will be futilized by the plain fact that we both grew up in the same remote Northern Ontario town of Thunder Bay. Only a fugue state could allow me to disassociate his works from the particularity of our hometown's landscape and the vulnerable characters within.

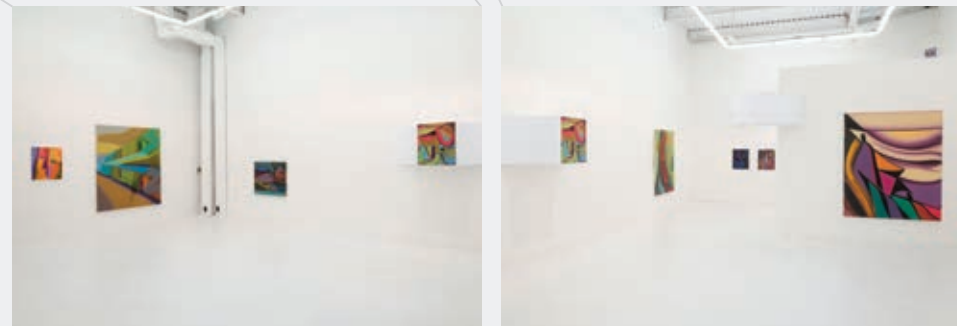
As children of Thunder Bay, we are hard-wired to anthropomorphize our landscape. Sure, there was plenty of LSD to go around in our teens to aid in this, but in this instance, I'm speaking more to the era of pre-pubes learning and the lore surrounding the city's natural landmark, the Sleeping Giant - a rocky peninsula resembling a giant lying on its back, protruding from the waters of Lake Superior. According to one Ojibway legend, a tribal chief called Nanabijou revealed the secret whereabouts of a silver mine to white settlers and as punishment, was turned into stone, eternally damned to be a geological mascot. I see "the Giant" in Oinonen's works - a monumental figure paralyzed in a reclined position, occupied only by the shifting pigmentation of the sky, as it refracts off the lapping water and onto his face. His mundane existence occasionally punctuated by a brilliant pink dusk sky or the oscillations of neon green, blue and purple from the Northern Lights.

On a micro-level of seeing, the fissured geometry that Oinonen constructs through calculated layers of washes and robust angular brushstrokes evoke the jagged shale that pepper the region's fractured shorelines or the violet-hued amethyst clusters beneath the topsoil. These rigid structures are enveloped by sweeps of tidal brushwork, producing a cool, polished metal-like finish – the icy waters of Lake Superior.



Thunder Bay's natural beauty belies a foreboding sense of Lynchian voodoo that seems to seep into the psyches of its inhabitants. Is this a byproduct of geographic isolation? Socio-economic hardships and the cycles of abuse and trauma it produces? The cold, dark and long winters? Or is it genetically inherited Finnish melancholia? It is within this backdrop where I locate the psychological states of Oinonen's figures. Their solemn facial expressions conjure in

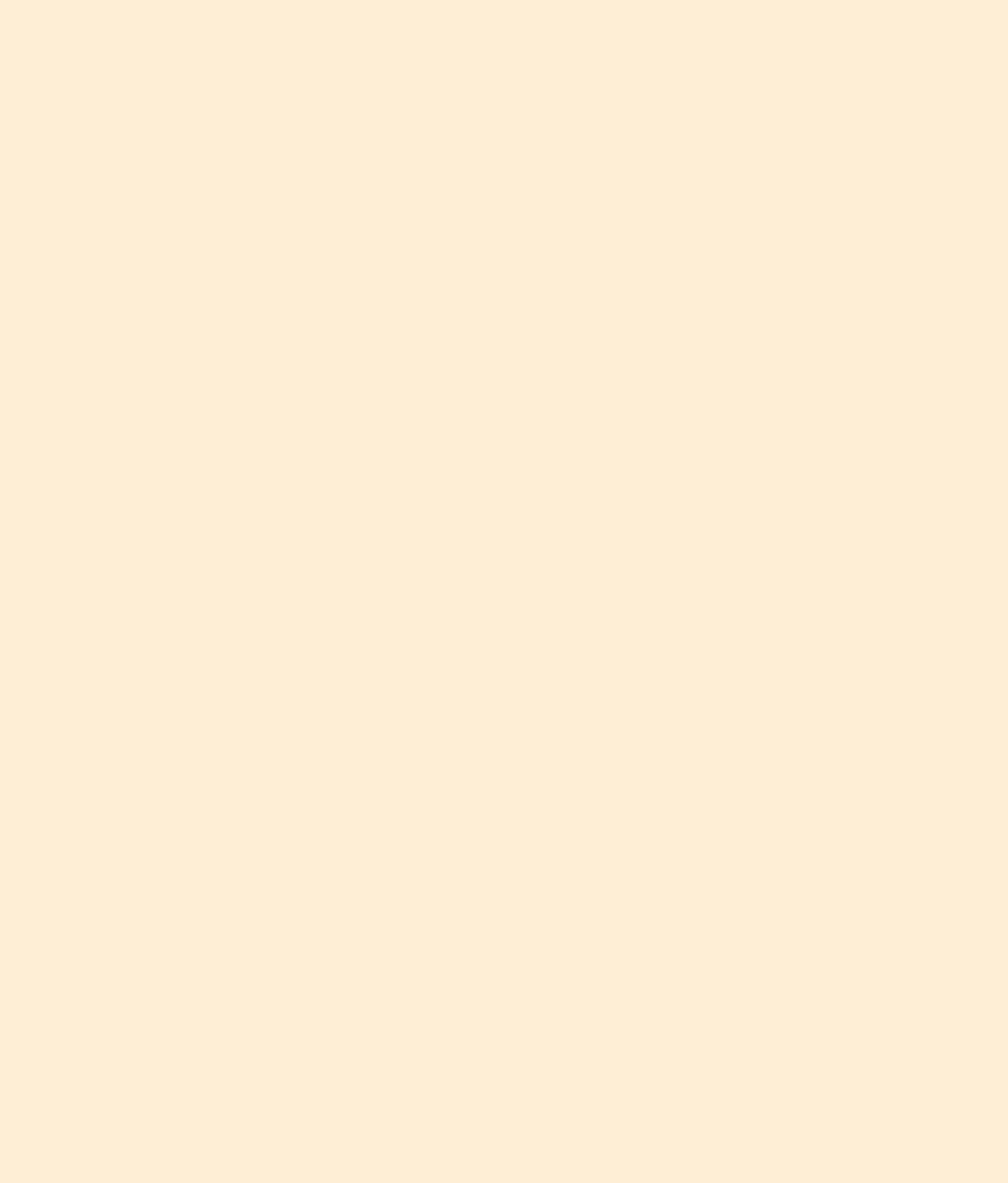
me sinking sensations and feelings of deep loss from the many friends whose lives have been strangled by mental illness. Oinonen's interest in "projecting a sentience onto the work" with the intent "to raise the awareness of the viewer to perhaps partake in the same emotion as the depiction" is inspired by the Japanese term *mono no aware*, or the "Pathos of Things". It is with this awareness of ephemerality, the gentle sadness in the transience of things that imbue his figures, as if they were helpless witnesses to a cascade of disease and blight.



Much praise/daps should be given for Oinonen's deft ability to destabilize dimensionality through his arsenal of optical tricks, seesawing between portraiture and landscape, painting and sculpture. Yet, the most striking and affecting aspect of these paintings is the sensitive way in which gentle vulnerability is conveyed and, more importantly, monumentalized.







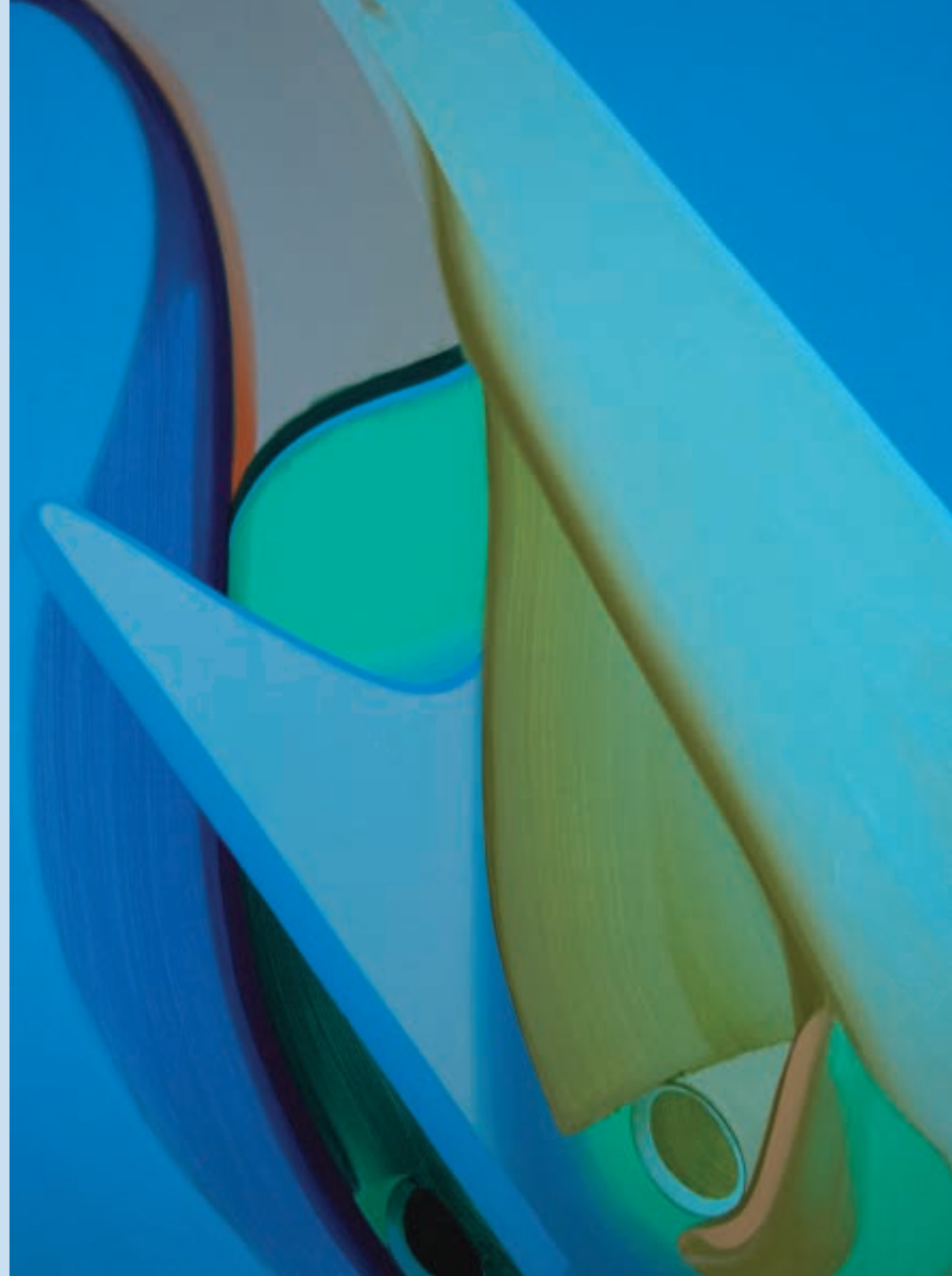


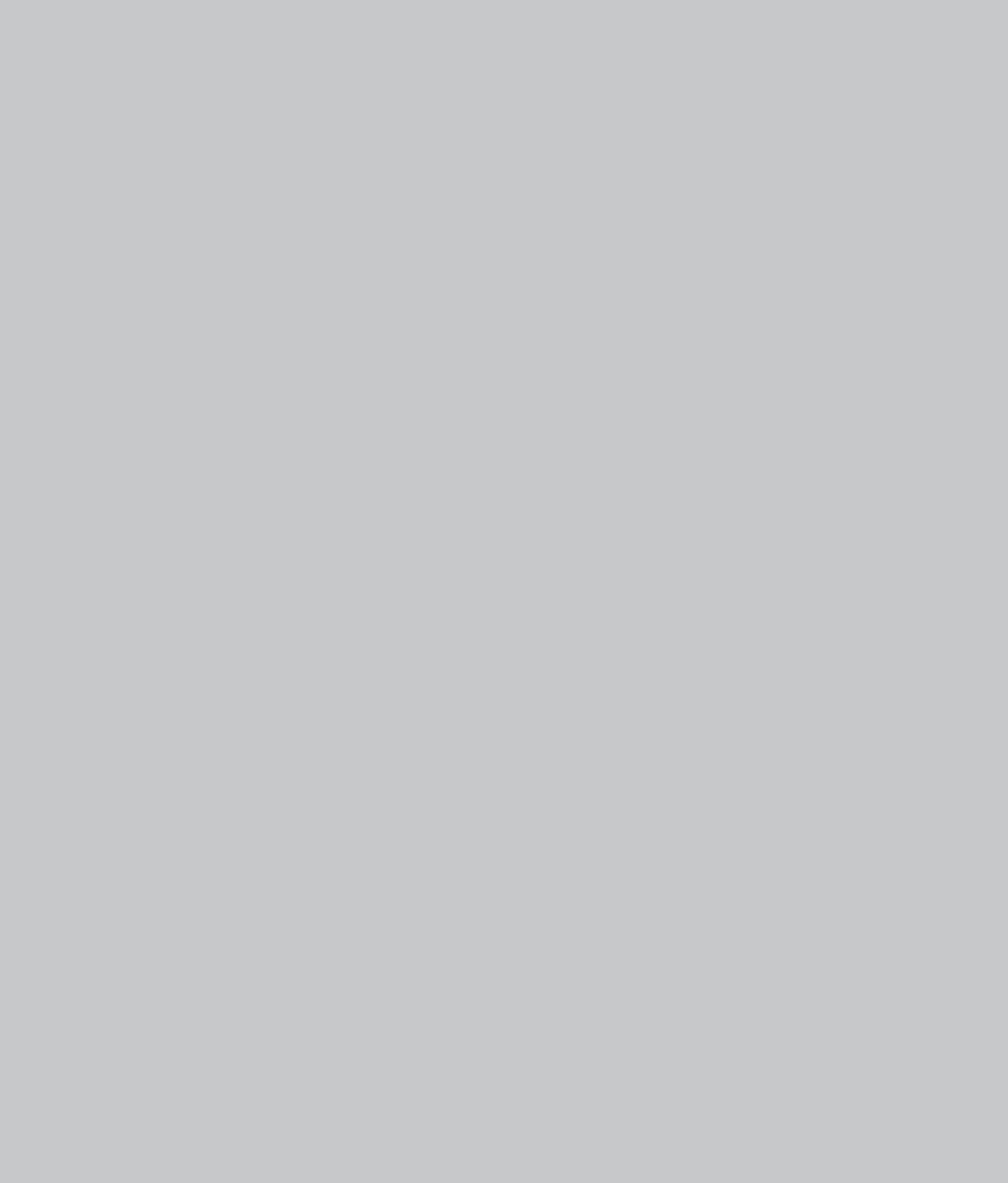


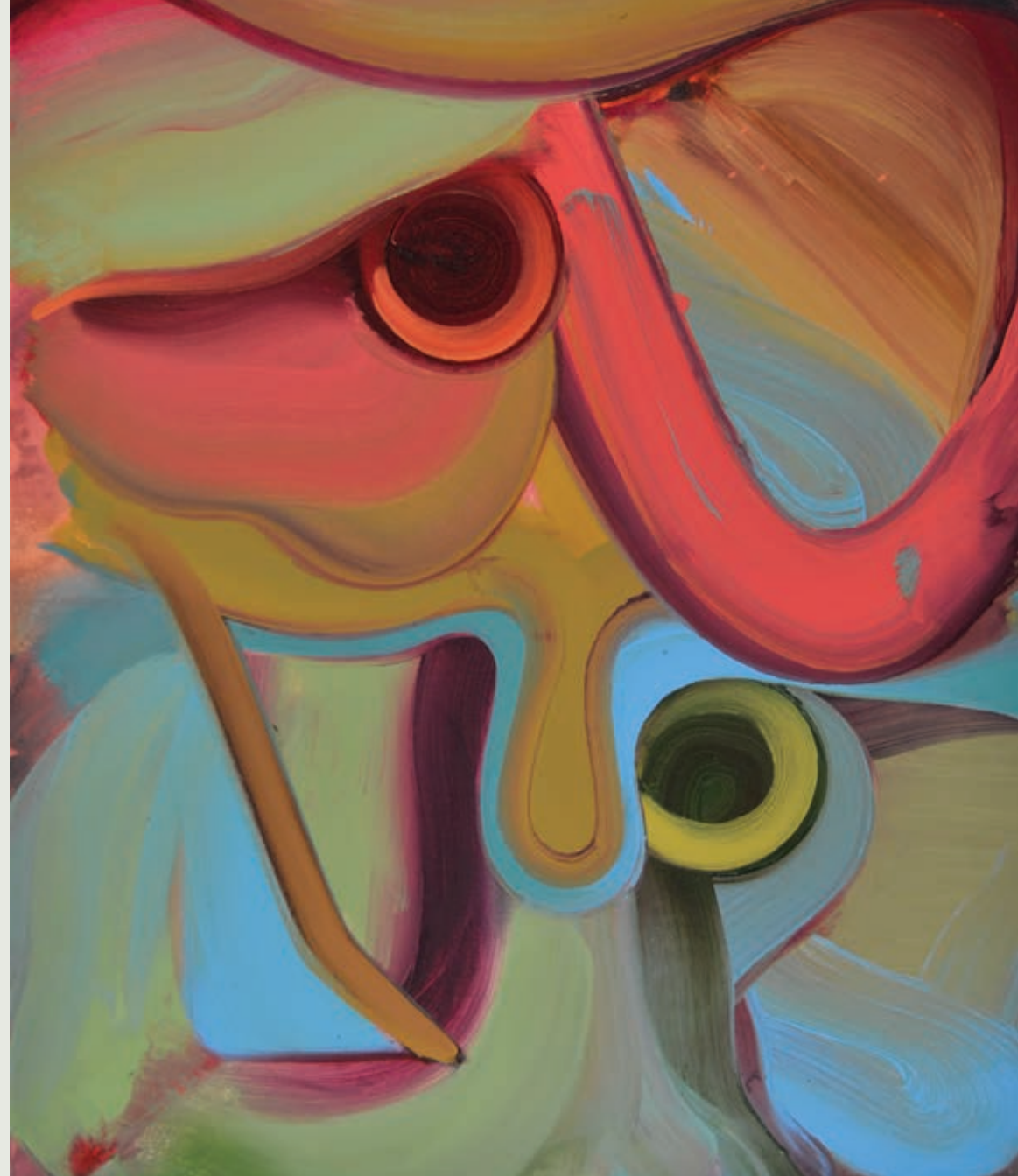


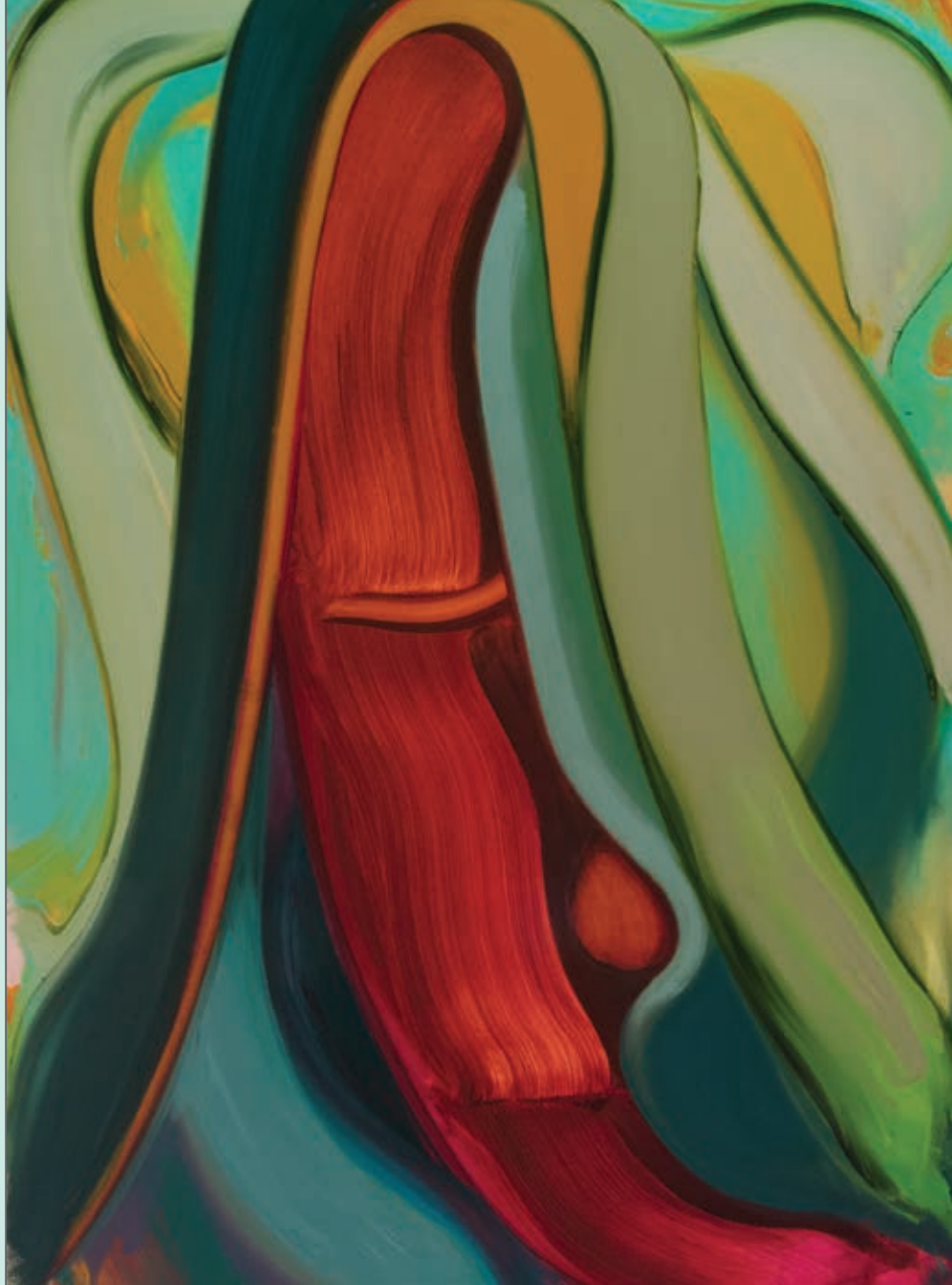
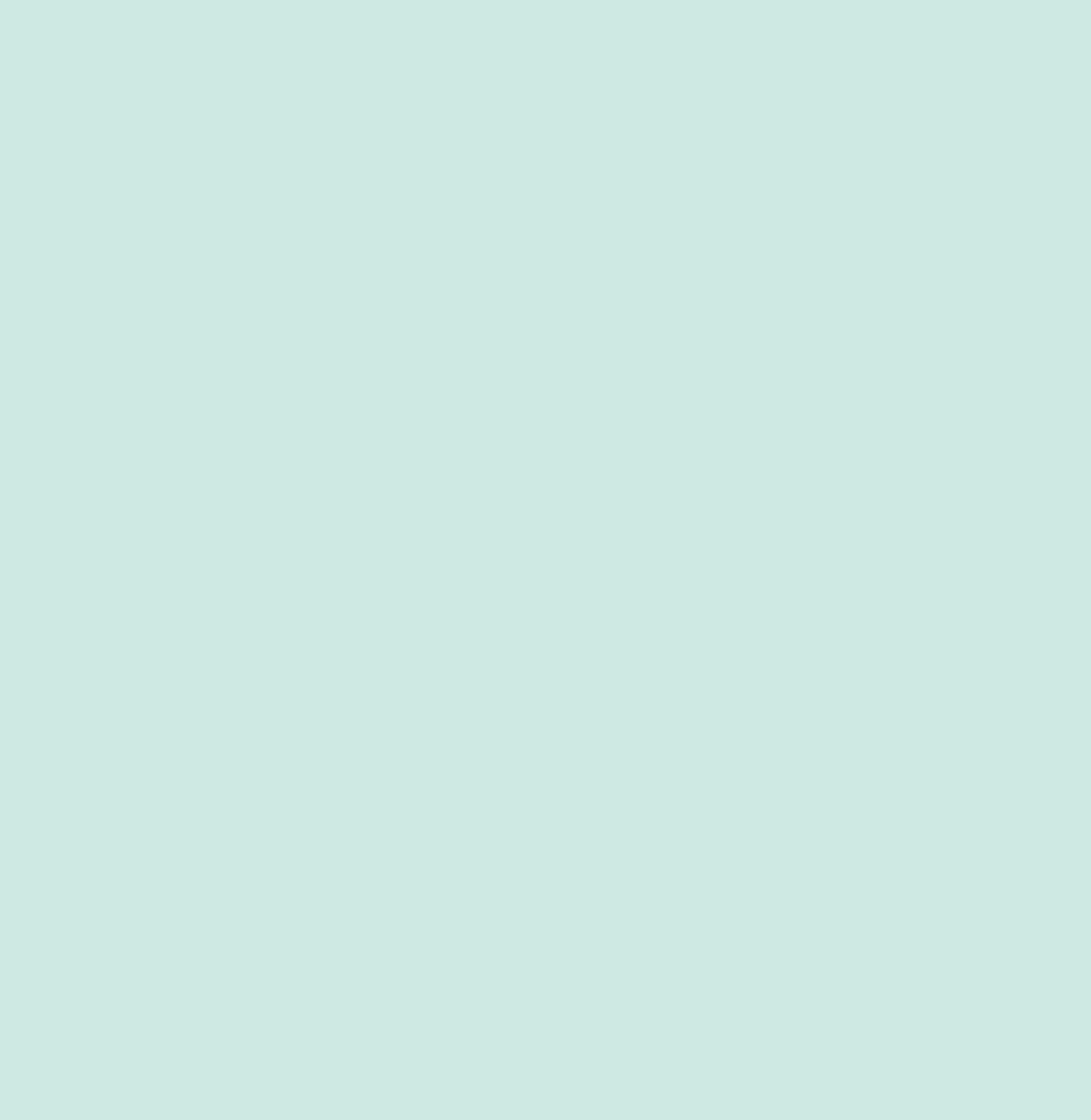








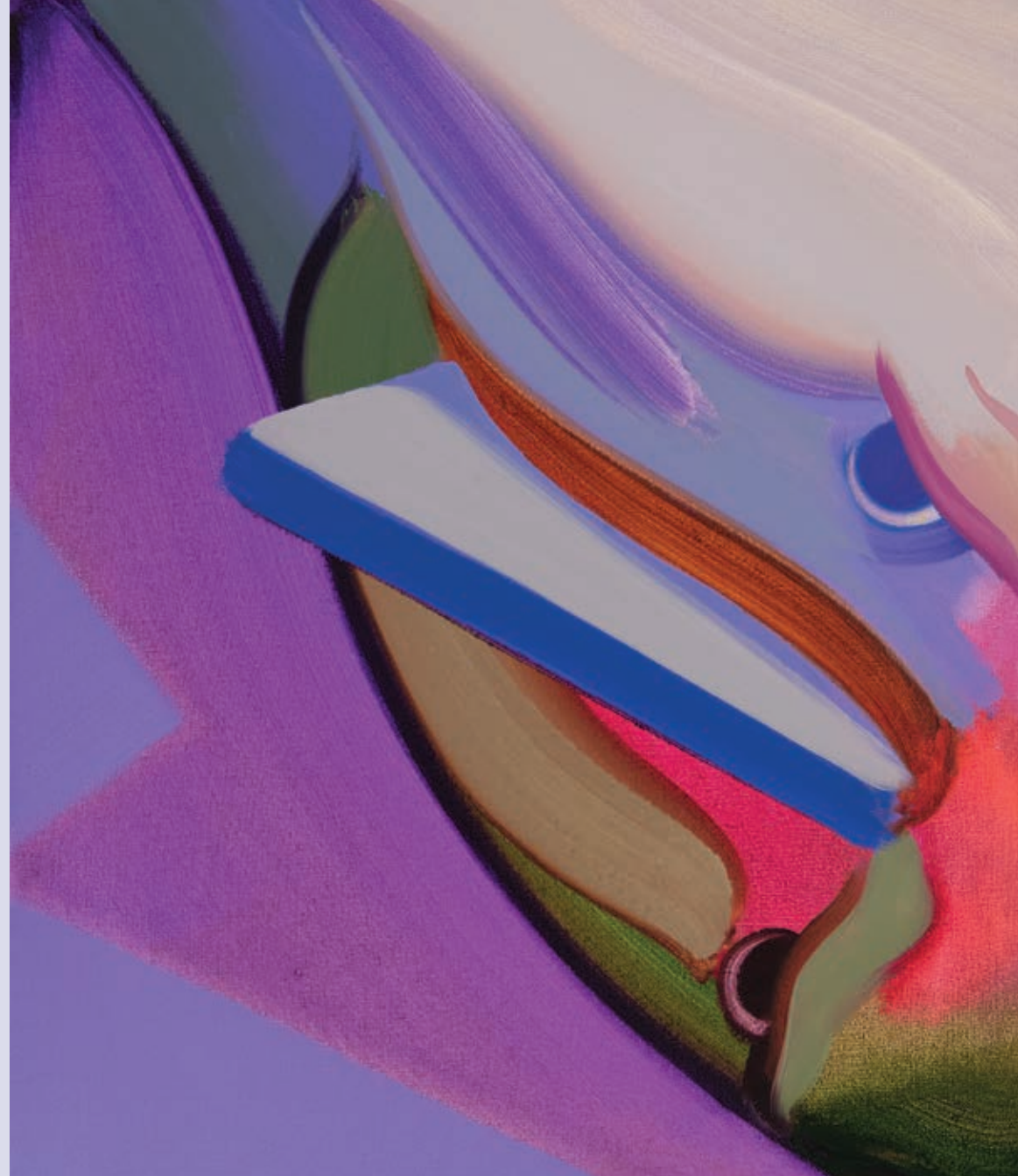


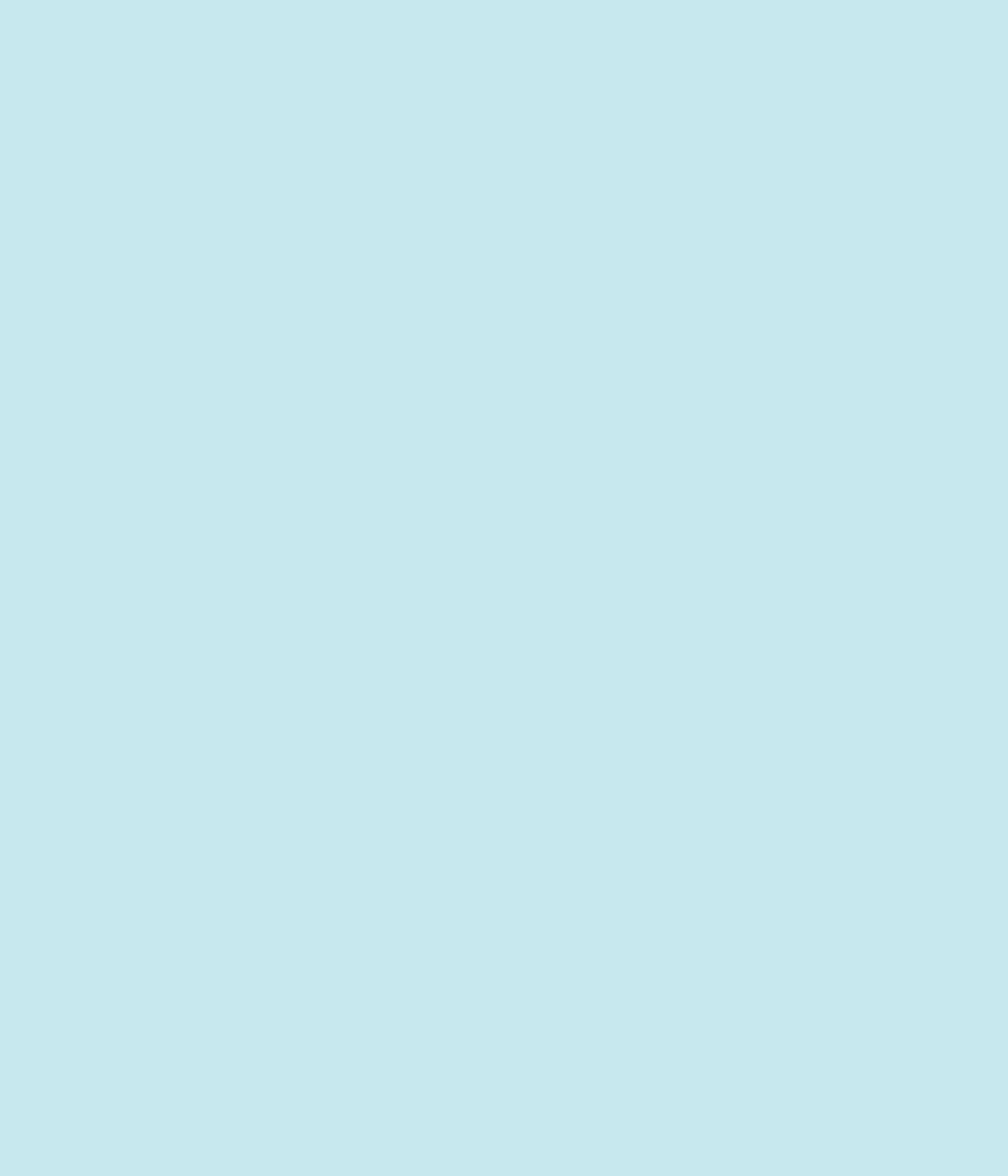




















untitled  
2011  
oil on canvas  
24 x 20 inches (61 x 50.8 cm)




untitled  
2013  
oil on canvas  
24 x 20 inches (61 x 50.8 cm)




untitled  
2013  
oil on canvas  
24 x 20 inches (61 x 50.8 cm)




pathetic thing  
2013  
oil on canvas  
24 x 20 inches (61 x 50.8 cm)




untitled  
2013  
oil on canvas  
24 x 20 inches (61 x 50.8 cm)




untitled  
2013  
oil on canvas  
24 x 20 inches (61 x 50.8 cm)



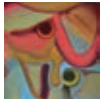
untitled  
2013  
oil on canvas  
24 x 20 inches (61 x 50.8 cm)



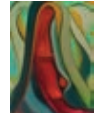
lula  
2013  
oil on canvas  
60 x 48 inches (152.4 x 122 cm)




untitled  
2013  
oil on canvas  
24 x 20 inches (61 x 50.8 cm)




glint  
2013  
oil on canvas  
24 x 20 inches (61 x 50.8 cm)




no aware  
2013  
oil on canvas  
60 x 48 inches (152.4 x 122 cm)




modern manners  
2013  
oil on canvas  
72 x 60 inches (182.9 x 152.4 cm)



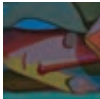
untitled  
2013  
oil on canvas  
72 x 60 inches (182.9 x 152.4 cm)



untitled  
2013  
oil on canvas  
24 x 20 inches (61 x 50.8 cm)



untitled  
2013  
oil on canvas  
72 x 60 inches (182.9 x 152.4 cm)



les idées  
2013  
oil on canvas  
30 x 36 inches (76.2 x 91.4 cm)

Anders Oinonen was raised in Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada. He graduated from the Ontario College of Art and Design, Toronto and holds an M.F.A. from the University of Waterloo. He lives and works in Toronto and is represented by The Hole in New York and Cooper Cole Gallery in Toronto.

#### SOLO AND TWO PERSON EXHIBITIONS

2013 [Eyebrow Haircut, The Hole, New York](#)  
2012 [People People, Cooper Cole Gallery, Toronto](#)  
2011 [Sadderday Night, two person exhibition with Mike Murphy, G Gallery, Toronto](#)  
[Pulling a Slow One, two person exhibition, LES Gallery, Vancouver](#)  
2010 [Sundogs, CTRL Gallery, Houston](#)  
2009 [Sadderday Night, two person exhibition with Mike Murphy, Modern Fuel, Kingston, ON](#)  
2008 [After After, CTRL Gallery, Houston](#)  
2007 [gone like tomorrow, Mehr \(Midtown\), New York](#)  
[outTHEwindow, Greener Pastures Contemporary Art, Toronto](#)  
2006 [its.what.its, Greener Pastures Contemporary Art, Toronto](#)

#### GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2013 [Buddy System, Breeze Block Gallery, Portland, OR](#)  
[Faux Life, Richard Heller Gallery, Los Angeles](#)  
[My Kind of Magic, Project4, Washington, DC](#)  
[Chicken or Beef?, The Hole Gallery, New York \(catalog\)](#)  
2012 [The Art of the Joke, V1 Gallery, Copenhagen](#)  
[Afterimage, DePaul University Art Museum, Chicago \(catalog\)](#)  
[Post, University of Waterloo Art Gallery, Waterloo, ON \(catalog\)](#)  
[Where My Cones At?, Double Break, San Diego and POVevolving, Los Angeles](#)  
[Zagga Zow, Cooper Cole Gallery, Toronto](#)  
[Portrait of a Generation, The Hole Gallery, New York \(catalog\)](#)  
[Give Me Head, James Harris Gallery, Seattle](#)  
2011 [Ineffable Plasticity: the experience of being human, Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto \(catalog\)](#)  
[Facemaker, Royal T, Los Angeles](#)  
[Hunter and Cook, Khyber ICA, Halifax](#)  
2010 [The Beach Division, RUINS, Toronto](#)  
[Insider/Outsider, Portugal Arte 2010, Lisbon](#)  
2009 [Williams Tower Gallery, Houston](#)  
[Cubes, Blocks and Other Spaces, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montréal](#)  
2008 [Carte Blanche | Volume 2: Painting, Organized with the Magenta Foundation, Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto](#)  
[Mail Order Monsters, Max Wigram Gallery, London](#)  
[Conceptual Figures, Deitch Projects, New York](#)  
[Ambivalent Figuration: People, Samson Projects, Boston](#)  
[A Loaf of Bread, a Carton of Milk, & a Stick of Butter, Hudson Franklin Gallery, New York](#)  
2007 [RBC Painting Competition, Ontario College of Art and Design, Toronto;](#)  
[travelling - Moncton NB, Barrie ON, Winnipeg MB, Vancouver BC](#)  
[BLACKNIGHT, part of Nuit Blanche, Toronto](#)  
[CTRL Group One, CTRL Gallery, Houston](#)  
[Keepin' It Real, The Drake Hotel, Toronto](#)  
2006 [Paperworks, Now Lounge, Toronto](#)  
2005 [ENJOY RELAX HAPPY, Niagara Gallery, Toronto](#)  
[The Social, Greener Pastures Gallery, Toronto](#)  
2004 [Just Enough to Tickle, Drabinsky Gallery, Toronto](#)  
[BLANKETCHUPCHUCK, Gallery 1313, Toronto](#)

## AWARDS/GRANTS

2013	Exhibition Assistance Grant, Ontario Arts Council
2011	<a href="#">Emerging Artist Grant, Toronto Arts Council</a> Project Grant, Canada Council for the Arts <a href="#">Emerging Artist Grant, Ontario Arts Council</a>
2008	Exhibition Assistance Grant, Ontario Arts Council <a href="#">Emerging Artist Grant, Toronto Arts Council</a>
2007	Exhibition Assistance Grant, Ontario Arts Council Semi-finalist, RBC Canadian Painting Competition
2006	<a href="#">Emerging Artist Grant, Toronto Arts Council</a> Emerging Artist Grant, Ontario Arts Council

## ARTICLES

Capps, Kriston. "My Kind of Magic." Washington City Paper May 24, 2013: 30  
Berlatsky, Noah. "Best Bets Our Top Six Picks for the Fall" Chicago Reader September 13, 2012: 30-31  
Hare, Anastasia. "Ineffable Plasticity: the experience of being Human and Human/Nature." cmagazine Spring, 2012: 52-53.  
Berger, Aaron. "Anders Oinonen's Facial Geometry." Beautiful Decay February 10, 2012.  
Fane, Kate. "Alexander Irving Anders Oinonen: The Inverted Portrait." Artsync.ca, February, 2012  
Vaughn, R.M.. "Gimme shelter – or at least a great fish tank." The Globe and Mail December 12, 2011: R14  
Olejnik, Wojciech. "Sadderday Night with Mike Murphy and Anders Oinonen", February, 2011  
Hill, Lizzy. "Magazine Scene." The Coast Halifax, March 12, 2011  
Artist project Hunter and Cook magazine Issue 07, 2010  
Burluik, Greg. "Artists have some fun on a Sadderday Night." The Whig Standard June, 2009  
Lee, Sasha. "Anders Oinonen." Beautiful/Decay March, 2009, Issue Z, pp.35-39  
Tarnowski, Dan. "Interview with Anders Oinonen." whitehotmagazine.com March, 2009  
Caroll, Sean. "Critics' Pick." ArtForum.com October, 2008  
Tarnowski, Dan. "Conceptual Figures @ Deitch Projects." whitehotmagazine.com October, 2008  
Bors, Chris. "Sad-sack in a Landscape." ArtSlant.com November 11, 2007  
Dault, Gary Michael. "These hills have eyes, and other points of view." Globe and Mail July 28, 2007 R10  
Keppler, Nick. "CTRL group one." Houston Press May 16, 2007  
Dault, Gary Michael. "Exhibit A: Right Back at You." Globe and Mail June 16, 2006

## PUBLICATIONS

Elg, Jesper. Chicken or beef?. New York: The Hole/Anteism, 2013.  
Jurakic, Ivan. POST. Waterloo: University of Waterloo Art Gallery, 2012.  
Dwyer, Bryce. Afterimage. Chicago: DePaul Art Museum, 2012  
Singh, Camilla; Lauder, Adam. essay. Ineffable Plasticity. Toronto: Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, 2012  
Syracuse University Salt Hill Journal, Issue 28, 2011  
Jane Urquhart, foreword ; Clint Roenisch, essay. Blanche v.2 Painting. Toronto: the Magenta Foundation, 2008  
MacMillan, Laurel. RBC Canadian Painting Competition: ten years. Toronto: Royal Bank of Canada, 2008

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