

At Jameson Gallery, pure poetry on canvas

Thomas Paquette's paintings are an oasis. Without posturing, without reference to some ideological complexity, they are, to put it simply, gorgeous.

They are extracted from nature's voluptuous moments but presented in a way that suits modernist sensibilities. In other words, Paquette is a

landscape painter with a limited debt to pictorial traditions.

The elements – the sky, hills, water – are traditional, but Paquette tackles them with a modernist's eye. They are of our

time, informed by the realism that we expect, but unexpectedly generous. In fact, in some of his paintings, he comes close to flamboyant. They have a richness that exceeds my memory of the world around us.

To sum it up, the tension in his work – the quality that gives it its visual energy – is the balance between physical fact and exceptional moments in nature.

You can test this at "Of Earth and Sky," Paquette's show at Jameson Gallery. The venues vary – Maine, the Northwest, perhaps California – but the issue is always the same. The event is the sky in dramatic moments and its ability to preside over the land. The latter is benign and general; the locus is not the principal thing. The former, the sky, is the main actor. It tests your memory of facts. Its ability to keep you wondering enables it to hold the land in check.

This show has been held over and is a pleasure.



Philip Isaacson

ART REVIEW

Thomas Paquette: "Of Earth and Sky"

Where: Jameson Gallery, 305 Commercial St., Portland, 772-5522

When: Paquette Closes Tuesday; Reed Closes Oct. 31

Hours: 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Saturday

BELOW: "Route 88," oil on canvas by Thomas Paquette, 25 by 48 inches.



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