

# VISUAL VIEWPOINT: Urban's abstract paintings have visceral appeal

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Canadian contemporary art star David Urban heats up Studio 21 Fine Art, 1273 Hollis St., Halifax, with thickly painted canvases that seem to twist and vibrate.

The newest paintings, made for this exhibit, are hot, visceral and vivid. They are abstract and have a limited palette, but they have references to reality — in windows of sky and cloud, leafy vines, the yellow of sun.

These paintings are passionate. They are objects as much as images, with thick thick paint visibly worked and mudded on. The mounds of paint lie on top of grounds of colour that just peek through.

Urban plays with flatness and depth in twisting window shapes. The colours blue and yellow are igniting.

His two blue paintings are inspired by a childhood visit to Halifax and represent the sea and an architecture with an intensity of expression. There are two more reflective 2013 paintings of a roughly painted figure that reflect his preteen son on a precipice of change.



The highly educated artist has an MA in English literature and creative writing from the University of Windsor and an MFA in visual arts from the University of Guelph, where he studied with Ron Shuebrook, whose influence can be felt in the rigour of Urban's line and construction of space.

His work has been compared to Wallace Stevens' mature poetry. There are faint echoes of Marsden Hartley and Tom Hopkins.

Urban has had 30 solo exhibitions and participated in nearly 40 group exhibitions. His work is in numerous private and public collections, including the National Gallery of Canada, Musee des Beaux Arts in Montreal and the Art Gallery of Ontario.

**His exhibit runs at Studio 21 to Dec. 3.**