

2014

## John Mendelsohn: The Passing Paintings Brochure

John Mendelsohn

The Thomas J. Walsh Art Gallery

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.fairfield.edu/mendelsohn-ephemera>

---

### Recommended Citation

Mendelsohn, John and The Thomas J. Walsh Art Gallery, "John Mendelsohn: The Passing Paintings Brochure" (2014). *The Passing Paintings - Ephemera*. 1.

<https://digitalcommons.fairfield.edu/mendelsohn-ephemera/1>

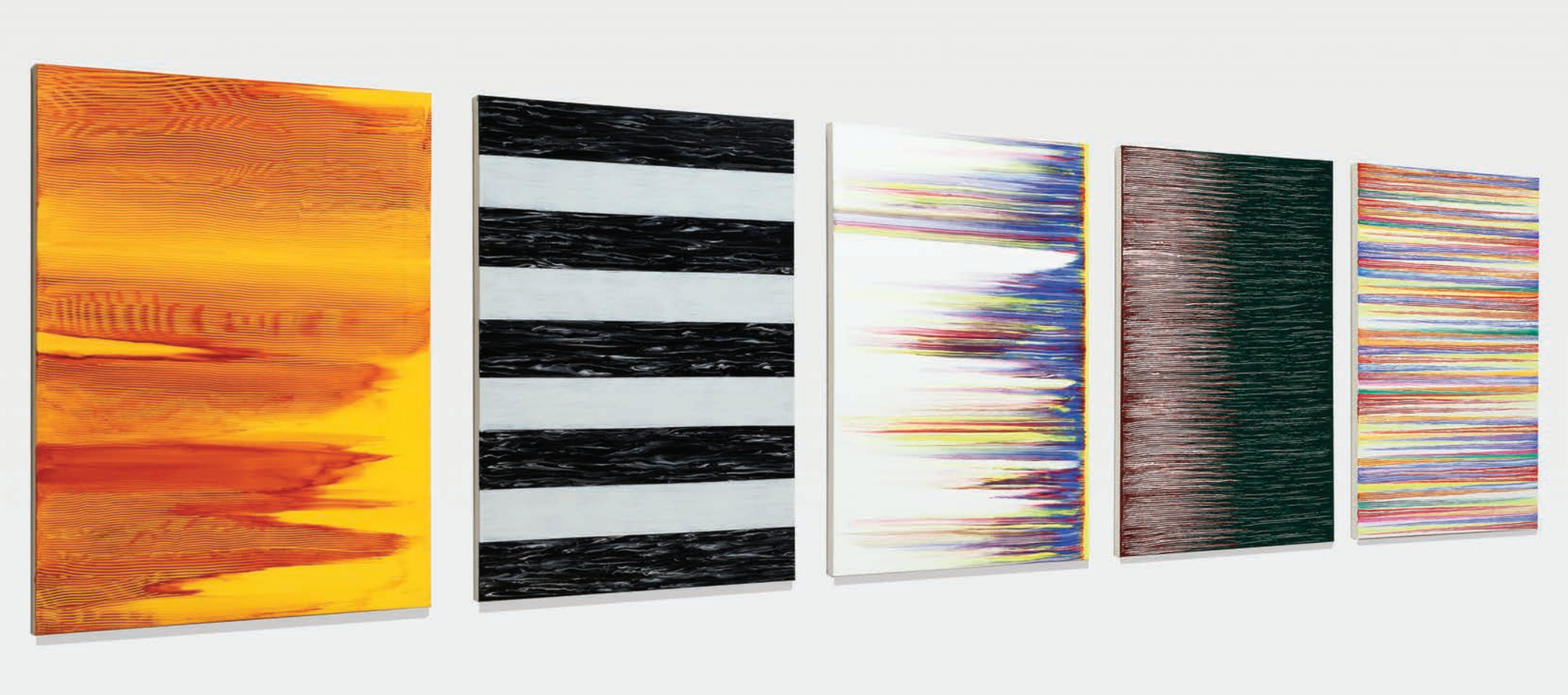
This item has been accepted for inclusion in DigitalCommons@Fairfield by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Fairfield. It is brought to you by DigitalCommons@Fairfield with permission from the rights-holder(s) and is protected by copyright and/or related rights. **You are free to use this item in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses, you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself.** For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@fairfield.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@fairfield.edu).

and bliss simultaneously present. The three *Paradise* paintings appear as markers between the major series and moments of relief.

John Mendelsohn

John Mendelsohn is an adjunct professor at Fairfield University in the Studio Art Program. He has exhibited his paintings extensively over the past four decades.

View the entire *Passing* series online at [www.johnmendelsohn123.com](http://www.johnmendelsohn123.com).



## John Mendelsohn: The Passing Paintings

*Passing* is a cycle of 48 paintings created during a 12-month period from 2010 to 2011. The paintings began with a sense of movement, as has all of my work for the past 15 years. A wave passing through the visual field of the first works became a kind of turbulence, initiating an intensive period of work. The unsettled spirits that “trouble the waters” of these paintings became clearer as I proceeded with the five series that constitute the *Passing* paintings—*Turbulence*, *Crosswalk*, *Vanishing*, *Flayed*, and *Paradise*. Each series has its own character, but they are all involved with states of radical change. Instability and dissolution appear in many forms; absence and presence are in continual dialogue. The paint itself is

**John Mendelsohn: The Passing Paintings**  
**December 2, 2014 - February 27, 2015**



Fairfield University

Walsh **ART** Gallery

1073 North Benson Rd.  
Fairfield, CT 06824  
[www.fairfield.edu/walshgallery](http://www.fairfield.edu/walshgallery)



treated physically: combed, marbled, wiped off, and scraped away. As the paintings break down, they open up, revealing the surface and space beyond. *Passing*, the title of the cycle, suggests a range of meanings: moving across the surface, a term for dying, and the sense of time and impermanence. Both progression and stasis are embodied in the repeated, but changing motifs of each series. In these works is a sense of extremity – blazing radiance, disappearing, protracted arrival, breaking beyond limits. Beauty is a presence in these works, along with an existential awareness. The *Passing* paintings are exhibited in series and follow in the chronological order in which they were made. The *Turbulence* paintings take their

the light bands disintegrate into tread-like lines. In the paintings, we seem to be looking at a provisional, broken pathway across roiled waters. The *Vanishing* paintings are made with red, yellow, and blue acrylic that fades away into an expanse of white. The process of making these works involves establishing and then wiping away the color; remaining is a series of phantom strokes that become pale and evaporate. In a direct, material way these works suggest a number of things: clinging to the edge, moments of surrender, reaching the further shore. They encompass roughness and delicacy, violence and obliteration. Overall, there is a sense of the giving up of what was once here to emptiness. The *Flayed* paintings began with



name from the moiré patterns, formed by combing the paint, that disturb the surface and create tight ripples or expanding waves. When the paint is wiped away, the effect is of a veil being torn open to reveal the space beyond. Some of the paintings are sheer and expansive, while others are tough and radioactive, but all have a sense of glory and loss coexisting in the dying sunset light. The *Crosswalk* paintings alternate light and dark bands in latex enamel, and recall pedestrian crosswalks. The works range from stark, minimal contrasts to highly agitated fields. Nocturnal in feeling, these paintings have the sense of a covert journey or night passage. The black enamel bands are marbled with white paint, while

a white ground of enamel that was combed into narrow furrows. Interlocking spears of deep red and green were painted on the surface, and then scraped, partially revealing the patterns of lines below. The red and green at times lose their separateness, and the white striations take on an emotional intensity. *Flayed* indicates the stripping off of skin, and in the removing of the paint is a sense of pain, the loss of identity, and the passage from one state of being to another. The *Paradise* paintings have contrasting hues pointing in alternating directions. With the paint partially removed, the linear pattern in white enamel below is revealed. The title and palette of the series connotes a sense of release and a new reality, with brokenness