

ART

SPOTLIGHT: HALLAR GALLERY

Robin Zmuda, former director of the recently closed Jayne Gallery, has decided to open her own gallery in Jayne's 4540 Main St. space. Helping out will be her parents, Jim and Barbara Hallar, and husband, Mike Zmuda. The new

Hallar Gallery will represent many former Jayne Gallery artists, including Philomene Bennett, Jane Booth, Josh George, Henry Isaacs, Dean Kube, Lou Marak and Allen Wynn. The gallery will have a grand opening "Artist Party" from 6 to 9

tonight and present its inaugural exhibit, a group show of gallery artists. For more information call (816) 561-5339 or visit hallargallery.com.

— Alice Thorson/The Star



CHEMICAL ATTRACTION

Painter challenges with energetic, abstract oil works

By ALICE THORSON
The Kansas City Star

Kansas City abstractionist Eric Sall's second one-person exhibit at Joseph Nease Gallery bursts with energy and experimentation.

In an art world where many artists have forsaken oil paint for non-art materials, this 26-year-old painter puts the medium through its paces. He daubs, he drags, he drips and streaks. He piles up gestural swipes into inchoate masses and makes them duke it out with crisp, hard-edged forms.

He also plays with the chemistry of paint, diluting it with turpentine to produce thin washes, mixing it with water to create lively mottled surfaces.

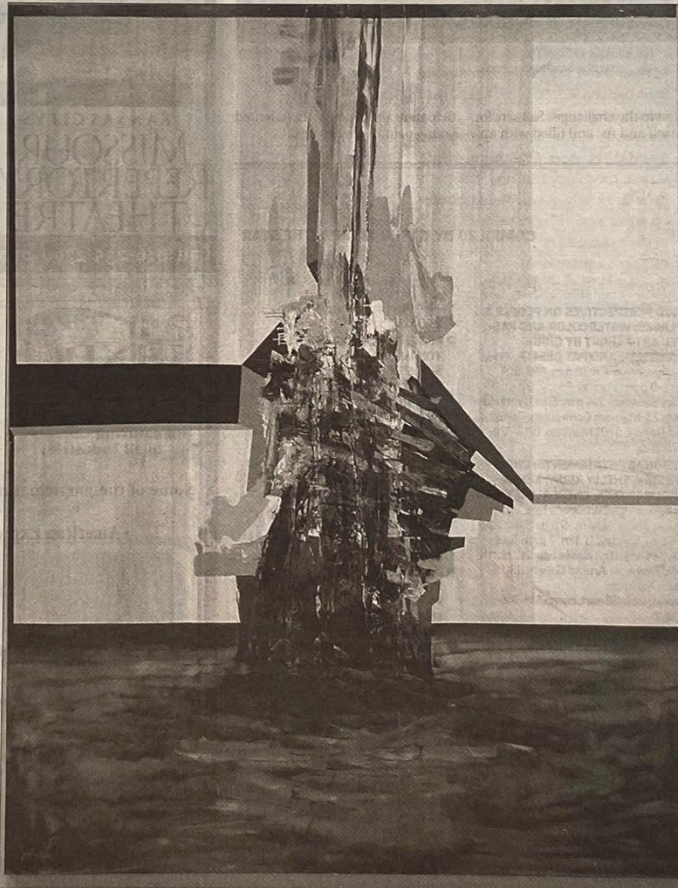
Sall won a Charlotte Street Fund award in 2001 and is currently in the middle of a 12-month residency at the Roswell Artist in Residence program in Roswell, N.M. He has worked his heart out for this show.

The exhibit comprises seven paintings on paper and 23 works on canvas — all but one completed in 2002.

Displayed in the front gallery, most of the oils on paper measure a modest 25-by-20 inches and feature iconic compositions of abstract shapes executed in a subdued palette of grayed tones. These key off the pastel tones of the found paper that Sall employs in these works, some from old Gap clothing store posters.

The paintings on paper are the most restrained works in this show. Much like a kid with a coloring book who keeps his scribbles inside the lines, Sall's painterly actions respect the contours of his invented shapes.

This changes when he works on larger sheets. The torquing purple form that forms the focal point of "Dr. Geek," one of two large works



Eric Sall's "Medicated Goo" is part of his exhibit "Something Amidst Nothing."

Courtesy of Joseph Nease Gallery

on paper in this group, anticipates the high painterly drama of the oils on canvas in the main gallery.

A major attraction of these can-

vases is their dynamic interplay of spontaneity and deliberation, the result of Sall's continual balancing of gestural passages and solid-color hard-edged forms, atmos-

pheric fields of color and strong architectural divisions of space.

In the towering 10-foot "Medicated Goo," for instance, broad tracks of paint zoom down from

THE SHOW

"Eric Sall: Something Amidst Nothing" continues at the Joseph Nease Gallery, 1819 Central, through Feb. 15. Hours are noon to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday and by appointment. Call (816) 421-2166 for information.

the top to mid-canvas, where they partake in a congestion of scrapings and strokes laid over a tippy edifice of slanted colored bands in an array of colors. A black horizontal band anchors this central "image" to the left-hand side of the canvas.

The field on which all this occurs consists of a blocky zone of streaky pink beside a vertical band of white. These abut a watery zone of inky blue covering the bottom third of the canvas.

The effect is one of the prow of a ship cutting through water, and Sall encourages such equations with familiar images. Drawing a comparison with the way people interpret Rorschach ink blots, he has titled his show, "Something Amidst Nothing."

In "Medicated Goo" and in several other paintings, Sall draws our attention to the edge of the canvas by painting a strip of contrasting color along parts of the perimeter. Each strip begins in a corner but does not necessarily continue along the entire edge of the work.

The unpredictability of this device keeps the viewer on his toes. It is perhaps most pronounced in "You Beautiful Bastard," in which the strip of bright blue that travels along the left-hand edge and turns the corner to continue along the bottom inexplicably peters out about halfway across the lower edge.

This is a compelling canvas, with its animated black gestural mass occupying the center of a streaky coppery background daubed with the occasional lozenge of red.

Sall's painterly bag of tricks seems bottomless. In "The Essence of Effervescence," a set of hard-edged vertical shapes