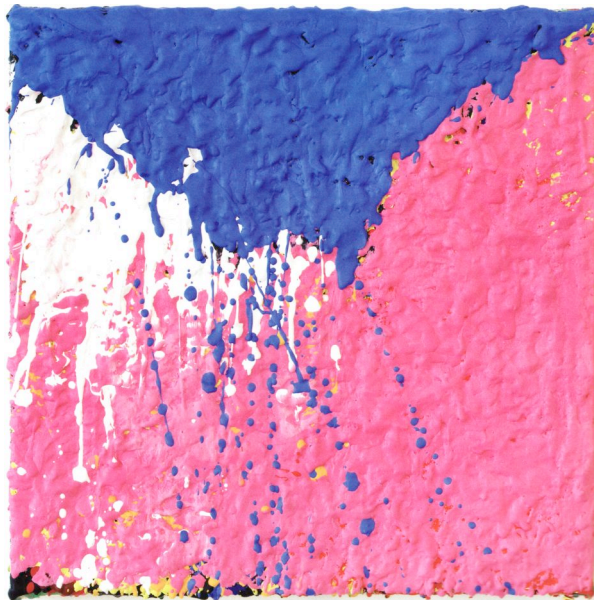


GERING & LÓPEZ GALLERY

NEW OLD GUARD  
**MICHAEL SCOTT**  
NOMINATED BY SOFIA COPPOLA



An artist who has been steadily making work in New York for over two decades, American painter Michael Scott has modestly persevered in blazing an individualistic course, which aligns him with many of the heroes of art history. But it is the artist's shy, quixotic, and entirely unpretentious disposition (reflected in the simple reverence of his abstract stripe paintings) that recalls the insightful, unvarnished storytelling of director Sofia Coppola. Perhaps this is why she is drawn to collecting Scott's work.

According to Scott, his art career began in earnest in 1989, when legendary gallerist Tony Shafrazi sold out an entire show of his methodical, black-and-white-stripe enamel paintings before the opening—though not necessarily, says the artist, due to the gallerist's blind faith. "Tony was great [to work with], because he didn't like anything," he says. "He liked one artist:

Roy Lichtenstein." Unlike the work of Lichtenstein, Scott's paintings have a deeply poetic, conceptual bent; they have sought to explore the idea of self and the role of the artist, aligning him with process-focused artists like Robert Morris. Inspired by On Kawara's date paintings, wherein the artist has, since 1966, simply painted the date each day, Scott went through a period in which the width of each stripe in his paintings was determined by a mathematical code. Eliminating artistic choice in the service of a quasi-Eastern philosophy of selflessness—"To break through the idea of originality," says the artist—the paintings made during this time period suggest a looming sense of the sublime. However, "As we live through life, we reinvent ourselves," the artist says, and he soon began creating thick, tactile stripe paintings with a "sloppy intuitiveness" devoid of artificial instruction.

While geometric abstraction often exasperates with its emotional opacity, Scott's work possesses a thorough humanness and vulnerability, which in turn has driven the artist to examine his formal breakthroughs, however subtle, the way a parent might chart the progress of a child's growth with pencil marks on the wall. These thought-soaked progressions make one think of the male character type Coppola is so gifted at creating—a past-his-prime Sleeping Beauty slowly awakening to the paralysis of his armor of charm-laced bullshit. While this type of man could not be more different from the rational and circumspect Scott, the truthfulness of such a character study unites both creators in their search for art's evanescent moment of meaning. **Aimee Walleston**

*Untitled*, 2007; **Artwork Michael Scott**  
Photography André Morin. Courtesy Gering & López Gallery, NYC

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