

ART & DESIGN

Steve DiBenedetto: 'Mile High Psychiatry'

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Steve DiBenedetto's painting "We Blew It" (2015), in his show at Derek Eller Gallery. Derek Eller Gallery, NY

Steve DiBenedetto has been showing in New York since the 1980s, but like many painters working on the slow-burn development plan, he's flourishing midcareer. Expertly constructed but aggressively psychedelic and curiously weird, [this is a phenomenal group](#) of canvases.

The show's title announces its lofty gonzo approach. The gallery release name-drops other touchstones: the film "Easy Rider"; the writers Thomas Pynchon and Terence McKenna. The titles set the pace for the paintings (or maybe it's the other way around). "I, Robot" (2015), one of the best works in the show, has a crusty retro-futuristic figure-shape at its center and is an apt homage to Isaac Asimov's science-fiction series of the same name and reminiscent of Eduardo Paolozzi's scruffy robot sculptures. "Seven Grain Satan" (2010-15), whose title conjures

Art in Review

By MARTHA SCHWENDENER

Jackson Pollock's transitional "[Full Fathom Five](#)" (1947), is composed of knotty, complicated sections. Smaller canvases like "Potato Battery" (2015) and "Hails From the Abyss" (2015) radiate from their centers with kinetic force, while "We Blew It" (2015) is an explosion of fragments fused into place with painterly precision.

The works here show the enduring influence of alpha painters like Philip Guston, Carroll Dunham and Brice Marden. But Mr. DiBenedetto has achieved a kind of organic understanding of both structure and surface. Most of the paintings are conceived on a nature-culture amalgamation of radiating objects like Ferris wheels, helicopter blades and octopuses. The paintings' layered and distressed surfaces lend them an aura of history and authority, like archaeological objects. But what could be seen as mere patina-effect feels decisively genuine here; Mr. DiBenedetto has earned it.

Derek Eller Gallery

615 West 27th Street, Chelsea

Through April 18