

An abstract painting featuring thick, expressive brushstrokes. The dominant color is a deep, dark blue, which is layered and textured. A prominent vertical stroke of bright white paint runs down the center-left. In the upper right, there's a large, irregular shape of white and light blue. In the lower right, a small, rectangular area of vibrant red is visible. The overall composition is dynamic and layered, with a sense of depth and movement.

HAROLD TOWN
ABSTRACTION
FIGURATION
SEPT 9 - OCT 4, 2023

DIGITAL CATALOGUE

CHRISTOPHER CUTTS GALLERY



HAROLD TOWN
ABSTRACTION FIGURATION
SEPTEMBER 9 - OCTOBER 4, 2023

“When one focuses on a detail of a Muscle painting and juxtaposes it with a 1950s abstraction, you can see the same artist, not only in painterly expression but also in his choice of colour palette.”

Christopher Cutts, “Harold Town, The Muscle Paintings,” 2023

The Christopher Cutts Gallery is proud to present “Abstraction Figuration,” a celebration of Town’s multifaceted practice, juxtaposing seven never-before-seen 1950s abstracts with the contentious 1980s Muscle paintings.

The controversial icon of Toronto’s 20th century art scene, Harold Town, spent his career experimenting with style and medium. While his peers established their signature styles, Town developed various series in collage, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, and painting, ranging from objective to nonobjective. From the launch of his career as the face of Toronto’s abstract expressionists to his 1986 retrospective at the AGO, Town’s work oscillated between abstraction and figuration, from SAPs to Enigmas, Snaps to Eccentrics, and so on.

The 1950s marked the launch of Town’s fame with record-breaking sales, works exhibited across Canada and abroad, and the founding of Painters Eleven. The remaining paintings of the era, unexhibited until now, are presented for the first time in the South Gallery.

A collection of the bold 1980s Muscle paintings in the North Gallery is accompanied by the 2023 publication, “Harold Town The Muscle Paintings” with an essay by Gary Michael Dault. Due to significant disdain for the pieces among the Toronto art scene, the artist had to fight to present these figurative works in the AGO retrospective. The works in this exhibition were exhibited for the first time last year, at the Christopher Cutts Gallery.

“Abstraction Figuration” reveres the contrasts in Town’s practice, objective versus nonobjective, praised and criticized, old with new. Join us at the gallery to see the recently uncovered 50s abstracts and the synoptic epilogue of the gallery’s 2022 “Muscle Show” – the first ever Muscle paintings exhibition.

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CHRISTOPHER CUTTS GALLERY



south gallery, north wall

CHRISTOPHER CUTTS GALLERY



HAROLD TOWN

Untitled

c. 1955

oil on masonite

48 x 96 inches (121.9 x 243.8 cm)

CHRISTOPHER CUTTS GALLERY



south gallery, east wall

CHRISTOPHER CUTTS GALLERY



HAROLD TOWN

Untitled

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HAROLD TOWN

Paper Monster (Memory of Chinatown 1945)

1958

collage on masonite

48 x 24 inches (122 x 61 cm)

CHRISTOPHER CUTTS GALLERY



south gallery, west wall

CHRISTOPHER CUTTS GALLERY



HAROLD TOWN

Untitled

c. 1958

oil on masonite

48 x 54 inches (121.9 x 137.2 cm)

CHRISTOPHER CUTTS GALLERY



HAROLD TOWN

Untitled

c. 1958

oil on masonite

48 x 48 inches (121.9 x 121.9 cm)

CHRISTOPHER CUTTS GALLERY



north gallery, north wall

CHRISTOPHER CUTTS GALLERY



HAROLD TOWN

Dead Boat Pond

1955 - 1956

oil on canvas

84 x 65.25 inches (213.5 x 165.7 cm)

CHRISTOPHER CUTTS GALLERY



north gallery, east wall

CHRISTOPHER CUTTS GALLERY



HAROLD TOWN

Untitled

1983

oil and lucite on canvas

42.5 x 30 inches (108 x 76.2 cm)

CHRISTOPHER CUTTS GALLERY



HAROLD TOWN

Muscle Man

c. 1983

oil on linen canvas

26 x 34 inches (66 x 86.4 cm)

CHRISTOPHER CUTTS GALLERY



HAROLD TOWN

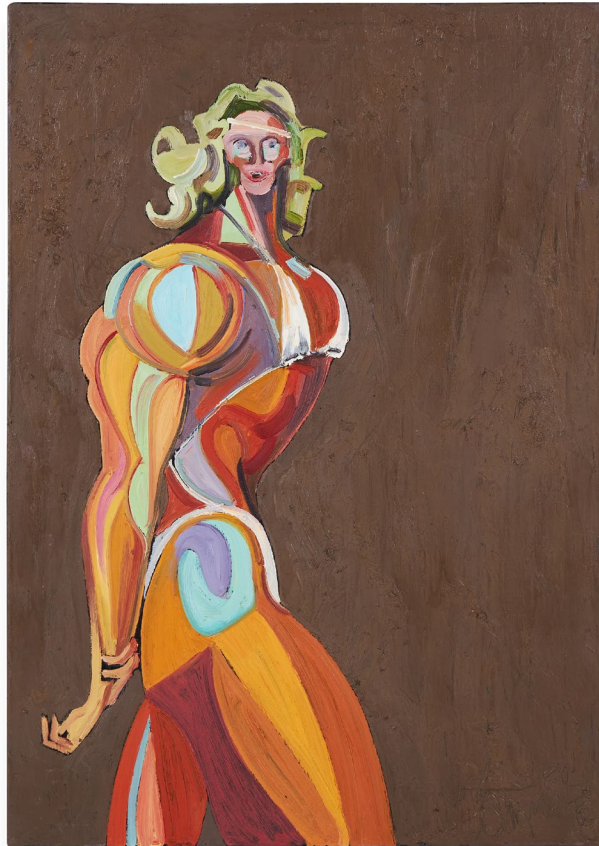
Musclemen

1983

oil on canvas

55 x 42 inches (139.7 x 106.7 cm)

CHRISTOPHER CUTTS GALLERY



HAROLD TOWN

Musclewoman

1984

oil on canvas

34 x 24 inches (86.4 x 61 cm)

CHRISTOPHER CUTTS GALLERY



north gallery, south wall

CHRISTOPHER CUTTS GALLERY



HAROLD TOWN

Muscle Men #4

1981

oil on canvas

74 x 90 inches (188 x 228.6 cm)

CHRISTOPHER CUTTS GALLERY



HAROLD TOWN

Untitled

1955

oil and lucite 44 on canvas

17 x 21 inches (43.2 x 53.3 cm)

CHRISTOPHER CUTTS GALLERY



north gallery, west wall

CHRISTOPHER CUTTS GALLERY



HAROLD TOWN

Untitled

1956 - 1957

lucite 44 and oil on masonite

48 x 48 inches (122 x 122 cm)

CHRISTOPHER CUTTS GALLERY



HAROLD TOWN

Box For Sickert St

1957

oil and lucite on canvas

31.75 x 22.75 inches (80.5 x 58 cm)