


An abstract painting featuring thick, expressive brushstrokes in vibrant colors. The palette includes bright reds, blues, yellows, and greens, set against a background of lighter, textured washes. The composition is dynamic and layered, with some areas appearing more saturated than others. The overall effect is one of intense energy and color. 

CHRISTOPHER CUTTS GALLERY

RICHARD GORMAN  
*COLOURIST*

DIGITAL CATALOGUE

OCTOBER 9, 2025 – NOVEMBER 1, 2025

An abstract painting with a vibrant green background, accented with horizontal bands and patches of orange, red, and yellow. The brushstrokes are visible, creating a textured, layered effect. The overall composition is dynamic and expressive.

“A tree ascended there. Oh pure transendence!  
Oh Orpheus sings! Oh tall tree in the ear!  
And all things hushed. Yet even in that silence  
a new beginning, beckoning, change appeared.”

Sonnets to Orpheus, Rainer Maria Rilke

# RICHARD GORMAN COLOURIST

OCTOBER 9 – NOVEMBER 1,, 2025

The Christopher Cutts Gallery presents “Richard Gorman – Colourist,” celebrating the Canadian painter and his mastery of colour. The show features large-format pieces from the 1970s and 1980s, along with his celebrated *Orpheus* series and later colour-theory based works, like the *Beta* series, created in the 1990s and 2000s.

In the early years of his career, Gorman emerged with both bold abstracts and pensive landscapes, characterized by thick impasto and dramatic strokes of colour. He would move from a broad palette of over 40 pigments to extremely limited selections of colour, at one point rejecting, and then eventually returning to, black. The 1970s and 1980s large-format abstract paintings in this exhibition, spanning 10 feet in length, are sublime experiences of colour and paint, almost overwhelming in scale and energy.

The *Orpheus* series, title inspired by poet Rainer Maria Rilke’s *Sonnets to Orpheus*, sees Gorman’s colourful riverside landscapes of the 1980s distilled to a single tree on a horizon line. Using a squeegee, Gorman swiped paint across his canvases to produce these wind-swept trees in fields of colour. The early *Orpheus* paintings were made with contrasting colours, and the solitary tree would appear whole or fragmented, almost figure-like at times. Gorman later turned to analogous colours, so close in hue that the surface of the canvas was left with just a ghost of the iconic tree.

In *Sonnets to Orpheus*, Rilke presents art as a transcendental experience, and the artist’s spirit as more than mortal. Nature would yield to Orpheus’s songs, and animals, stones, and trees would follow the sound of his lyre. His art connected the heavens and earth. Gorman’s favourite part of the poem depicted the hero’s mourning

following his descent to the underworld to bring his lost love, Eurydice, back to life, and his infamous failure to do so, a mistake born of the same love that got them that far.

Gorman explored colour theory throughout his career, and he would reference Josef Albers’ thoughts on the relativity of colour – the idea that the way the eye perceives colour is not absolute, but rather dependent on surrounding colours, lighting, and context. The *Beta* series from the 2000s is a culmination of these explorations, featuring bursts of vibrant colours against contrasting backgrounds. He called the visual effect generated by the clash of these colours on the canvas “colour jumps.” The pigments appear to bleed into one another, seeming to vibrate and leap back and forth over the edge where they meet. The technique gives the minimal paintings a buzzing quality.

“Richard Gorman – Colourist” is the gallery’s first major Gorman exhibition since the artist’s death in 2010. It emphasizes his play with colour and his work’s capacity to evoke intense visual and emotional experiences in viewers.

*“Richard was a prince of a fellow. He was well-liked – loved – by everyone. He had this energy, and everyone thought they were his best friend. He was very serious about his art practice. He was dedicated. When you went to his place, you’d see these colour swatches littered all over his studio, experiments with colour in his Albers-ian way.*

*He was able to imbue his life-force into his work. You still feel that when you’re in the presence of his work. His character really comes across in his paintings, sophisticated, elegant, and kind.”*  
– Christopher Cutts

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“She, so beloved that from a single lyre  
more mourning rose than from all women-mourners,  
that a whole world of mourning rose, wherein  
all things were once more present: wood and vale  
and road and hamlet, field and stream and beast, -  
and that around this world of mourning turned,  
even as around the other earth, a sun  
and a whole silent heaven full of stars,  
a heaven of mourning with disfigured stars: -  
she, so beloved. “

Sonnets to Orpheus, Rainer Maria Rilke

# CHRISTOPHER CUTTS GALLERY



south gallery, north wall

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RICHARD GORMAN

*21st Century Gothic*

1979

oil on canvas

76 x 118 inches (193 x 299.5 cm)

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south gallery, east wall

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RICHARD GORMAN

*Orpheus Series*

1998

oil on canvas

24 x 20 inches (61 x 51 cm)

26.25 x 22.25 inches (66.5 x 56.5 cm) framed

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RICHARD GORMAN

*Orpheus Series*

2002

oil on canvas

24 x 20 inches (61 x 51 cm)

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RICHARD GORMAN

*Orpheus Series*

2001

oil on linen

24 x 20 inches (61 x 50.8 cm)

26.25 x 22.25 inches (66.5 x 56.5 cm) framed

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*Orpheus Series*

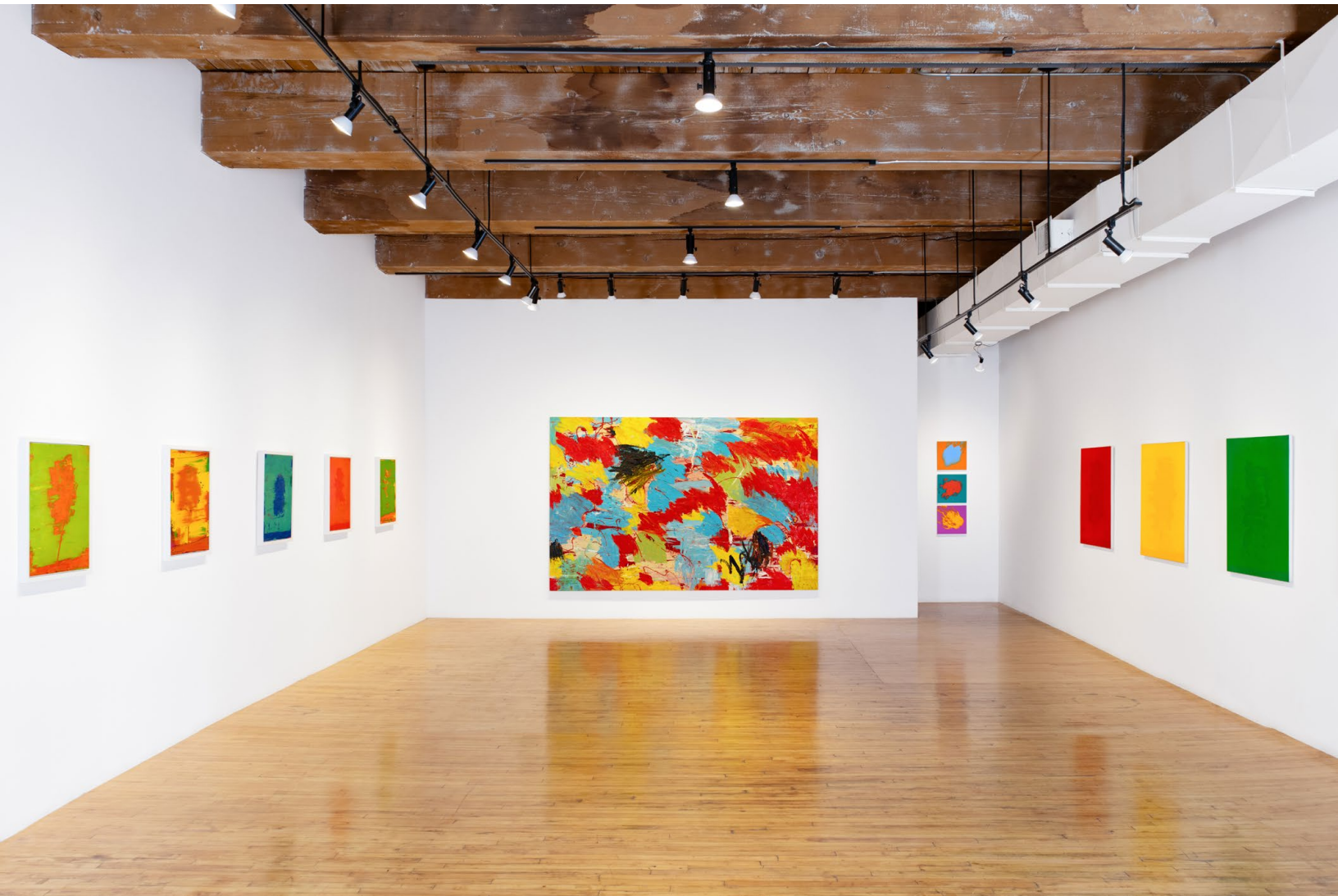
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oil on canvas

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26.25 x 22.25 inches (66.5 x 56.5 cm) framed

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south gallery, south wall

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RICHARD GORMAN

*Upstream Oracle*

1981

oil and lucite on canvas

76 x 120 inches (193 x 305 cm)

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RICHARD GORMAN  
*VIII Beta Series Passing Threat IV*  
2006  
oil on linen  
14 x 15 inches (35.5 x 38 cm)

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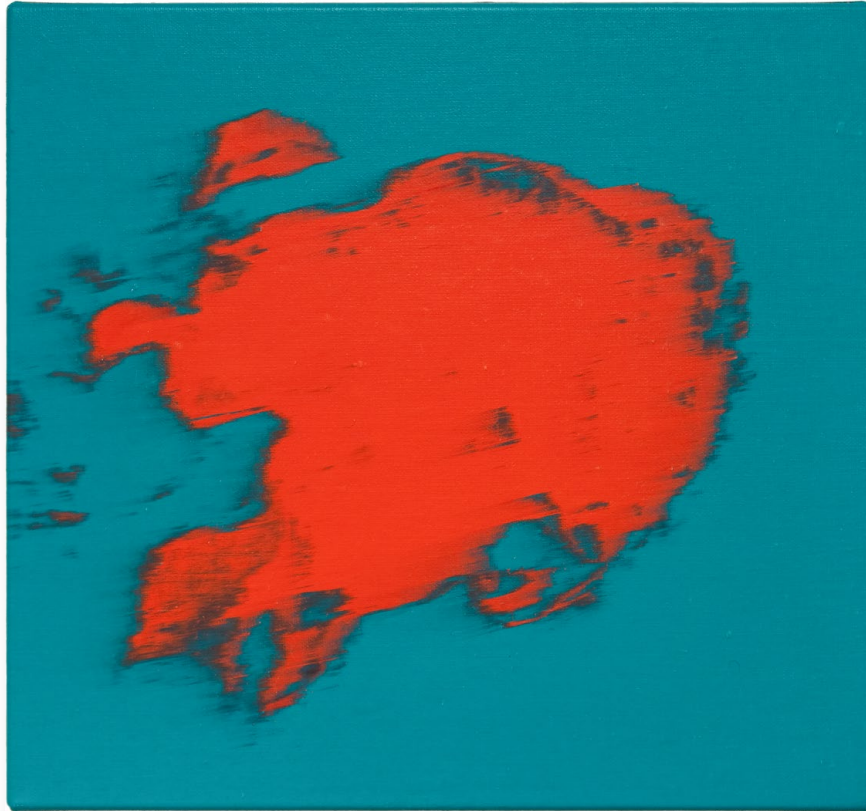
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RICHARD GORMAN  
*V Beta Series Passing Threat I*  
2006  
oil on linen  
14 x 15 inches (35.5 x 38 cm)

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RICHARD GORMAN

*II Beta Series Helos*

2006

oil on linen

14 x 15 inches (35.5 x 38 cm)

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south gallery, west wall

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RICHARD GORMAN

*Orpheus Series — Before Dusk No. 2*

2004

oil on linen

36 x 32 inches (91.5 x 81.5 cm)

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RICHARD GORMAN

*Orpheus Series — Eos No. 2*

2004

oil on linen

36 x 32 inches (91.5 x 81.5 cm)

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RICHARD GORMAN

*Orpheus Series – Mid Summer No. 2*

2003

oil on linen

36 x 32 inches (91.5 x 81.5 cm)

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RICHARD GORMAN

*Orpheus Series — Deep Night No. 2*

2003

oil on linen

36 x 32 inches (91.5 x 81.5 cm)

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north gallery, north wall

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RICHARD GORMAN  
*New Orleans*  
2006  
oil on linen  
60 x 56 inches (152.5 x 142 cm)

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north gallery, east wall

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RICHARD GORMAN

*Moon Rise*

2005

oil on linen

26 x 24 inches (66 x 61 cm)

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RICHARD GORMAN

*Blue Fire*

2005

oil on linen

26 x 24 inches (66 x 61 cm)

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RICHARD GORMAN

*Kisst*

2005

oil on linen

26 x 24 inches (66 x 61 cm)

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RICHARD GORMAN

*Tundra*

2005

oil on linen

26 x 24 inches (66 x 61 cm)

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north gallery, south wall

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RICHARD GORMAN

*Untitled Orpheus Series*

1997

oil on panel

10.5 x 8 inches (26.5 x 20.5 cm)

11.75 x 9.25 inches (30 x 23.5 cm) framed

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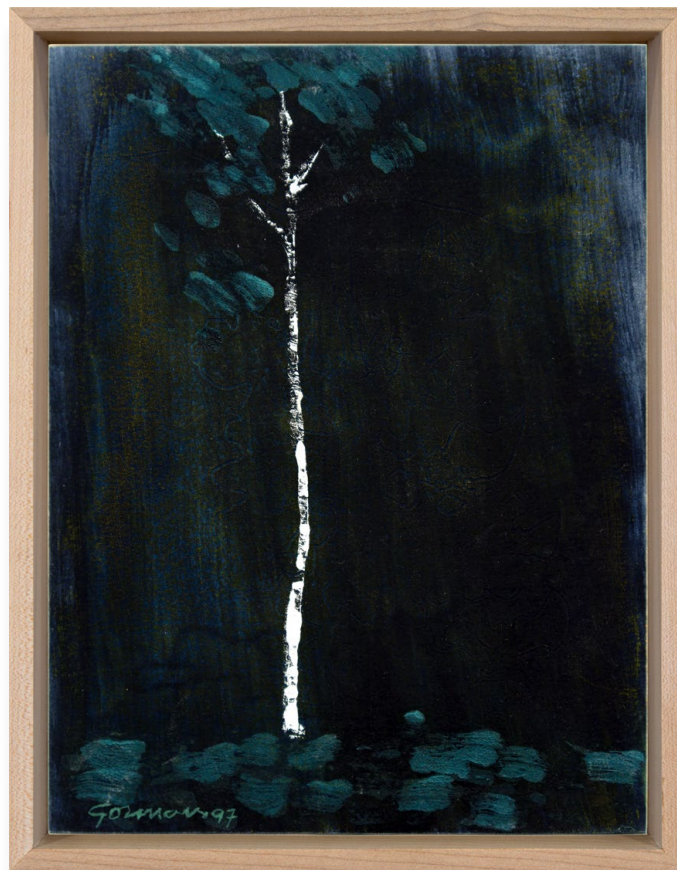
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RICHARD GORMAN

*Orpheus Series – Dusk*

2002

oil on linen

42 x 38 inches (106.5 x 96.5 cm)

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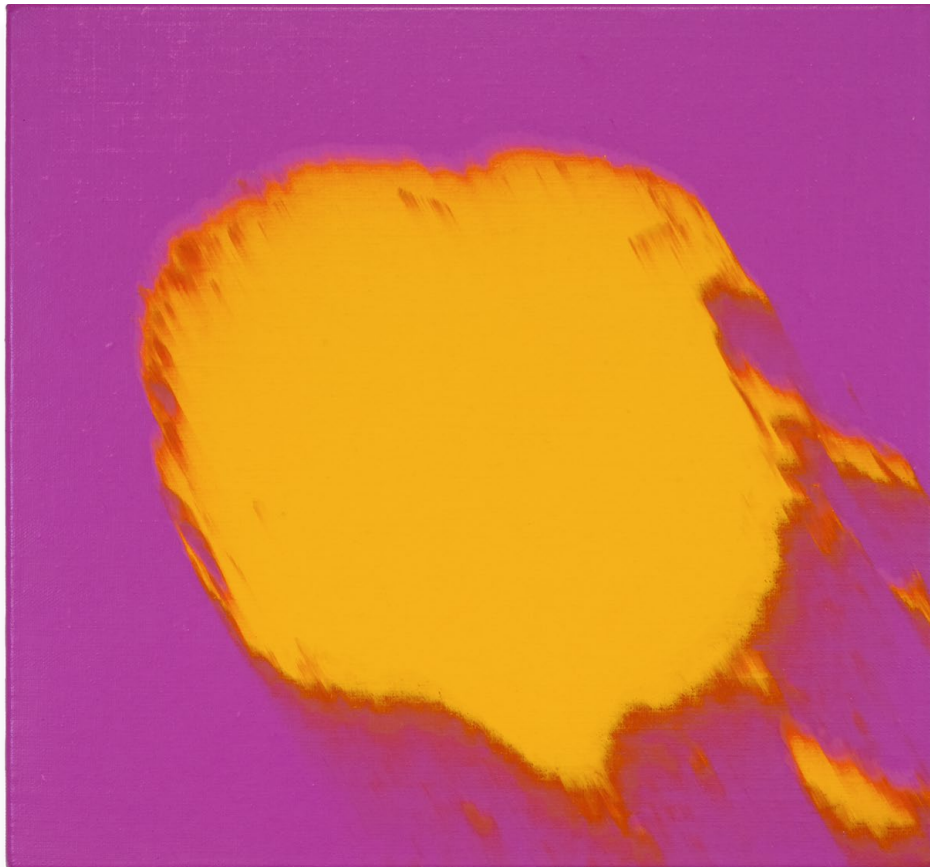
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*VI Beta Series Passing Threat II*  
2006  
oil on linen  
14 x 15 inches (35.5 x 38 cm)