

PRESS RELEASE:

TOPOGRAPHICAL VIEWS

Steve Dennie Photographs

Tommy Fitzpatrick Paintings

Terrell James Paintings

APRIL 4 – MAY 16, 2026

Opening Reception: April 4th, 5-7pm



BARRY
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GALLERY

A new exhibition at Barry Whistler Gallery argues that an expanded field in the visual arts was forged through innovations in photography first identified in the 1970's. This was a paradigmatic shift in visual culture. Curated by William Jenkins, *New Topographics: Photographs of a Man Altered Landscape*, ran from October 1975 to February 1976 at the International Museum of Photography and Film, which is part of the George Eastman House in Rochester New York.

Jenkins, chose mostly young, unknown photographers who worked on a small scale, primarily in black and white. They had in common an interest in landscape photography that pictured post-war America through a focus on nature and a terrain altered by a banal, decaying built environment featuring subjects like suburban homes, parking lots, gas stations, and buildings along interstate thoroughfares. Their images also left out human figures, lending an element of the *uncanny* to the style. In the original catalog Jenkins suggests that the style is more "anthropological than critical." This directly ties into our current geological epoch known as *Anthropocene*, so named as an identification of human influence on the Earth that the New Topographics movement seized upon.

The curators for this current exhibition have selected Steve Dennie, a photographer who serves as a direct stylistic tie to the movement, whose work will be shown alongside Tommy Fitzpatrick and Terrell James, both painters. By doing so, this exhibition intends to demonstrate the continued vitality and relevance of the style, making a strong assertion that the interests and preoccupations of New Topographics, as a phenomenon in visual culture, informs a competing medium vis-a'-vis contemporary painting.

Also, the work on view underscores the changing aspect of our understanding of *Nature*. Considering how we experience and picture reality, it becomes clear that the notion of *Nature* as fixed and cloaked in authenticity, melts away into the realization that *Nature* is culturally identified.

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Steve Dennie, *08.18.00760*, 2018, Printed on Hahnemühle photo rag paper with archival inks, painted, 12 x 12 in, Edition of 10

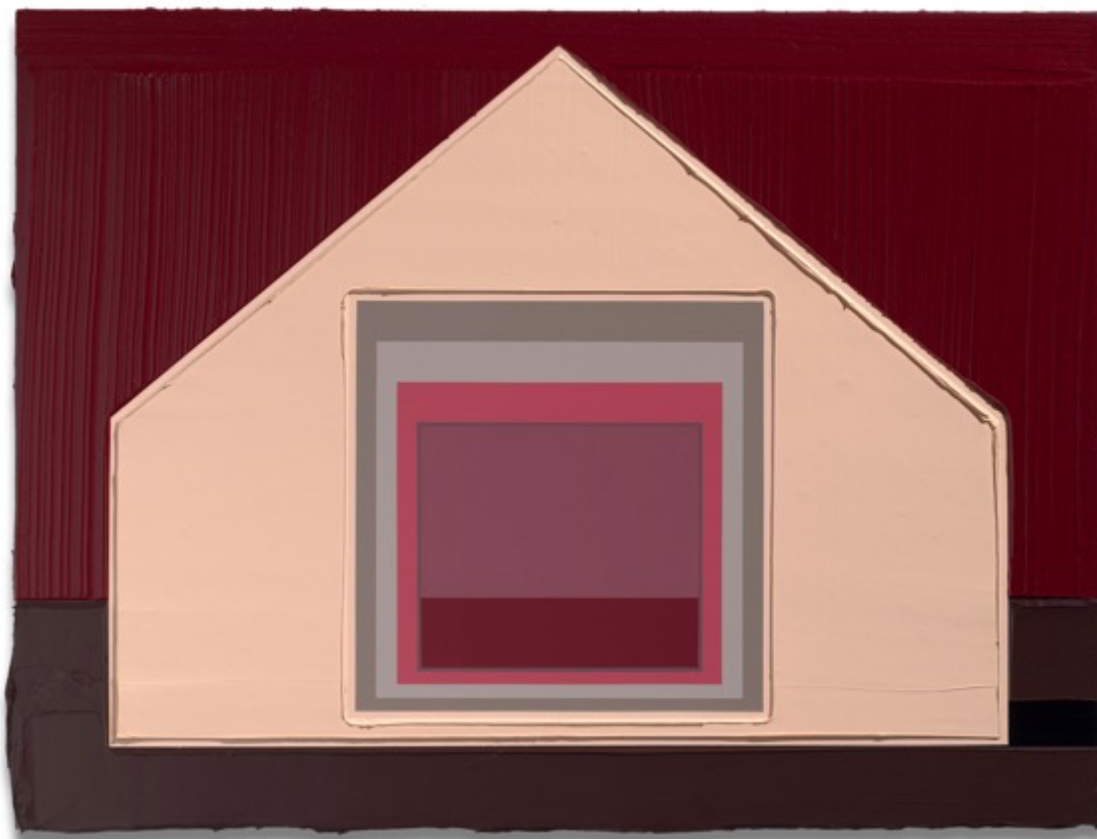
Steve Dennie started off as a painter whose interest in photography goes back decades through both curating and actual practice. He sees his photographs as composed of individual elements that can be reduced to abstract art and cites as early inspiration both Kazimir Malevich and El Lissitzky. A veritable precisionist, all of Dennie's pieces feature 4x6 inch images printed on Hahnemuhle photo rag paper with archival inks in which the images are either horizontal or vertical on the page. He works in color as well as black and white and, like the Topographics photographers, is interested in the idea that a small image that depicts a vast space is capable of reeling in the viewer. His titles are simply the dates when the pictures were taken. The images selected for this exhibition are a master class in how to achieve an exacting focus, depth, and texture.

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In his own words Tommy Fitzpatrick has “continuously looked to architecture in reflecting the impermanence of human ambition.” This is the thread that brings him into this exhibition with a selection of paintings from a new body of work that he started only a few years ago. His paintings are front elevation images of homes drawn from American vernacular dwellings. They are strongly defined by line and geometry, adroitly rendered with a thick impasto of paint and finished with trowels and spatulas. Each painting is deceptively the end result of a long process of editing color variants and shapes before a final decision arrives on exactly which path to follow. A study of color analogous with Joseph Albers’ mid 20th century project, Fitzpatrick’s departure puts abstraction into dialog with domesticity and a thick painterly volume. In line with the intimate small format work that defines New Topographics, Fitzpatrick has executed a suite of twelve small paintings that forced him to compress his process into a new format since he usually works on a larger scale.



Tommy Fitzpatrick, *Oxblood*, 2025, Acrylic on canvas wrapped on panel, 30 x 40 x 2 in

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This leads to Terrell James' compelling landscape paintings, she usually starts off with a photograph, which relates to both the subject matter and medium of the New Topographics. Her work leaves the photos behind, becoming large-scale paintings abstracted from their original images in oil and acrylic on canvas or linen. In *Water Sounds*, 2025, she presents a light touch with brushstrokes that travel in all directions depending on where we are in the image. She rarely includes a horizon line, beckoning the viewer to trace the entire surface, unmoored, so as to soak in the visual phrases found here. In the sublime painting, *Glacier*, 2026, a mass of ice takes up the central section of the canvas surrounded by terrain suggestive of mountains, with vegetation rendered in dark greens.



Terrell James, *Glacier*, 2026, Oil on linen, 42 x 42 in

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As a movement, the legacy of New Topographics endures in the work of these artists and countless others; this last year marked the 50th anniversary of the original exhibition. As the built environment and surrounding areas continue to contend with a repetitive process of alteration, it seems probable that the style will continue to thrive, expanding in scope so as to keep up with documenting what lies ahead.

Additional information and images available upon request.

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