

Gregg Renfrow

Almost All My Life

Nancy Toomey Fine Art | 1275 Minnesota Street, San Francisco

Exhibition Catalog | October 25 to December 16, 2023

“The true end of Art is not to imitate a fixed material condition, but to represent a living motion.”

-George Inness (1825-1894)





As the exhibition title *Almost All My Life* suggests, artist Gregg Renfrow has been working for most of his career on acrylic panels that allow light to filter through the pigment. Since 1982, Bay Area based Renfrow has been exploring and experimenting with light and color as the fertile field in which he deploys his materials and processes. Renfrow applies pigment dissolved in polymer medium to translucent sheets of cast acrylic. These hang unframed and slightly forward, allowing the passage of light through in both directions. The luminosity that ensues seems a kind of summoning of light through the medium of color—a conjuring of experience that we the viewer bring to the work as we physically experience it.

Through this process of pouring, Renfrow creates organic layers of overlapping colors that at times undulate, or create straighter areas of striated color fields. Set slightly off the wall, they create the luminous effect of light coming from behind them, or passing through them in a mysterious way. This abstract state of no depiction provides a graceful and calm atmosphere that encourages contemplation and the experience of pure seeing. The essence of being suggested by the pictorial space of these works dissolves the boundaries of color and form, light and spirit. As art critic Kenneth Baker commented, “Renfrow strikes a fine balance between describing and summoning light in paintings made of pigment-bathed, cast acrylic... these works find a resolution he has sought for years.”





“The Power of What,” writes Gregg Renfrow. “The subject of my paintings is always the viewer. The purpose of my paintings is presentation. I present color and form to the viewer within a matrix of light. The means of presentation is a constructed substrate of cast acrylic. The translucent picture plane is supported by a hanging rail (cast acrylic) which puts the painting surface slightly forward of the wall to summon light, which then quickens the color and form of the painting. The intention is to present an object which appears, in both form and placement, as a painting would. As the subject draws nearer to the painting/object, there is a liminal interval where expectations (regarding received notions of the ontology of painting) transform into curiosity, and then into engagement. This galvanizing effect activates the engaged viewer into a formation of an experience unique to that person—the subject—standing in front of the object. Light never stays still. Everything happens in light. Apprehension = Beauty. The state of play here in the studio is the dynamic relationship between opposites. Order and Chaos. Flow and Restraint. The field of color [the painting] consists in multiple translucent layers of color/glaze.

The color/glaze is mixed to the viscosity of milk (there is always more color/glaze than necessary to cover the entire surface to be painted) and poured onto the picture plane/painting. The color/glaze is guided by gravity and the varying angles of the painting in relation to the horizontal. Most of the color/glaze ends up on the floor. When the color/glaze is set, the net result is a color halation of the faintest hue. This methodology is repeated until the painting is complete. The painting is complete when the desired hue relationships have taken form, according to established procedural and aesthetic formulations. Order + Chaos = Beauty.”

Gregg Renfrow received his BFA from San Francisco Art Institute and has exhibited both nationally and internationally since the mid-1970s. Renfrow lives and works in the SF Bay Area. His work is included in numerous private and public collections, including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Oakland Museum, and Weisman Collection in Los Angeles.

Almost All My Life is Gregg Renfrow’s fifth solo show at Nancy Toomey Fine Art in San Francisco.





Gregg Renfrow

The Shade of Fantin-Latour, 2023

Polymer, pigment on cast acrylic

48 x 48 inches

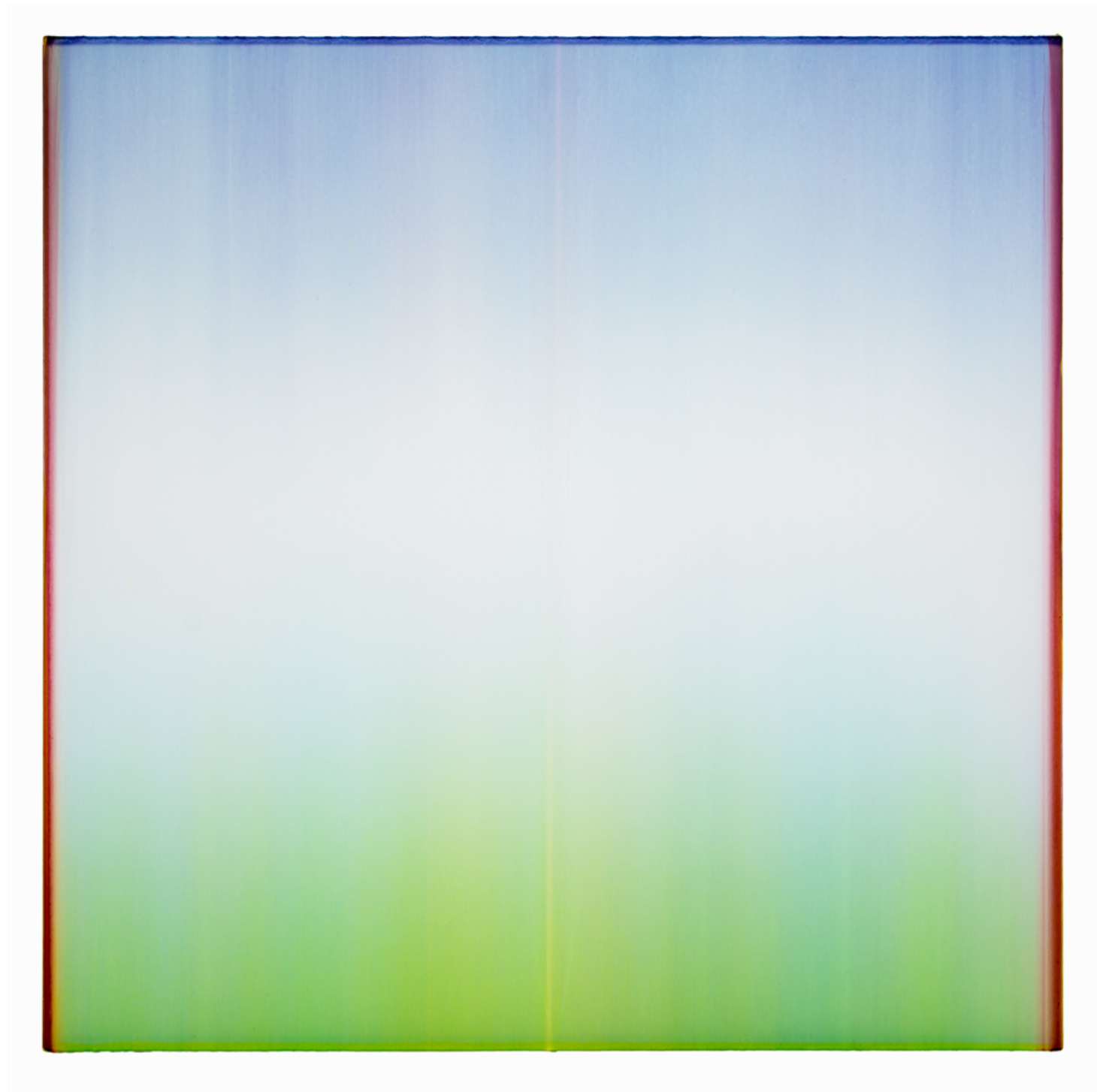


Gregg Renfrow

To Every End, 2023

Polymer, pigment on cast acrylic

21 x 18 inches

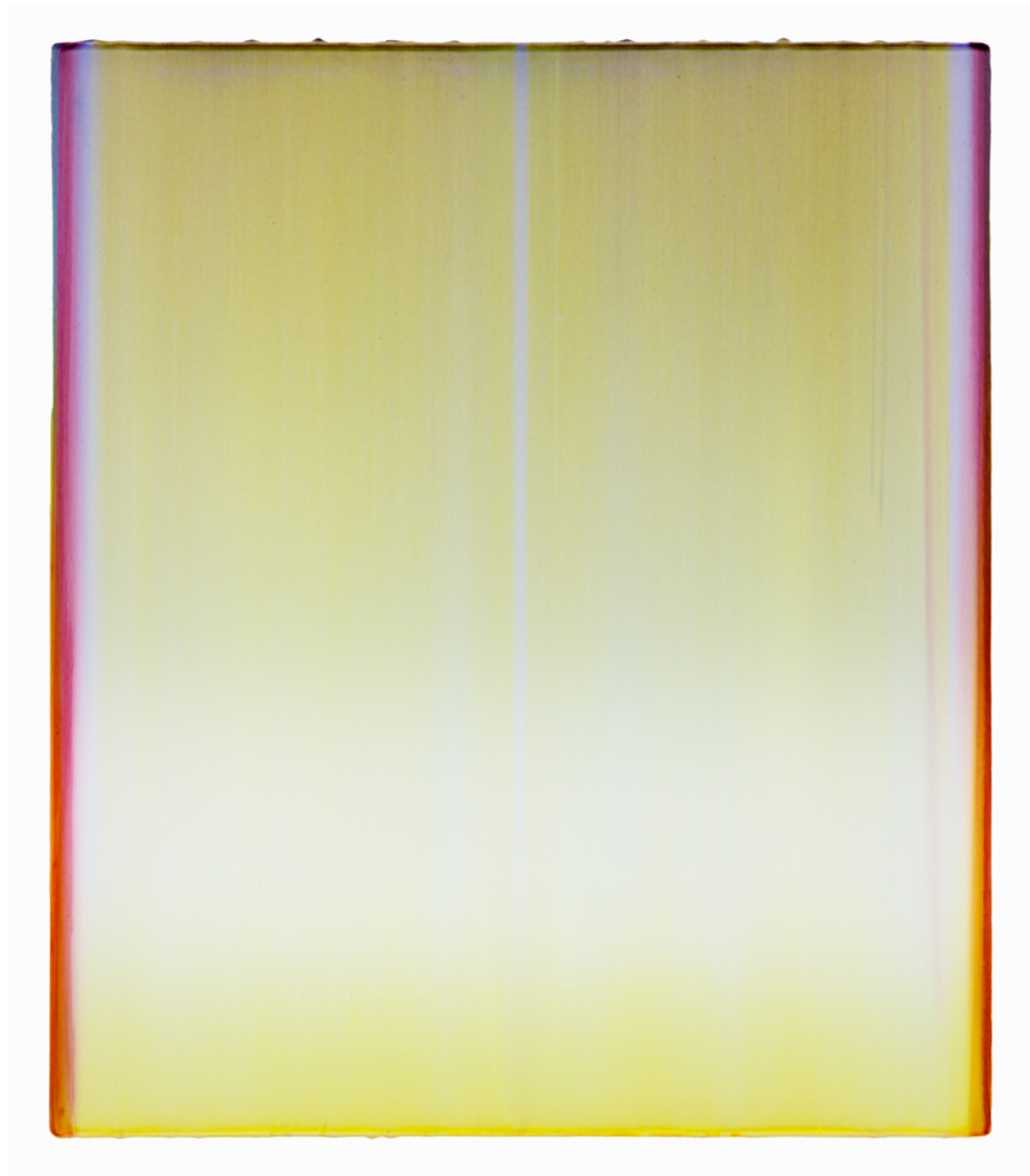


Gregg Renfrow

Counting My Wanderings, 2023

Polymer, pigment on cast acrylic

48 x 48 inches

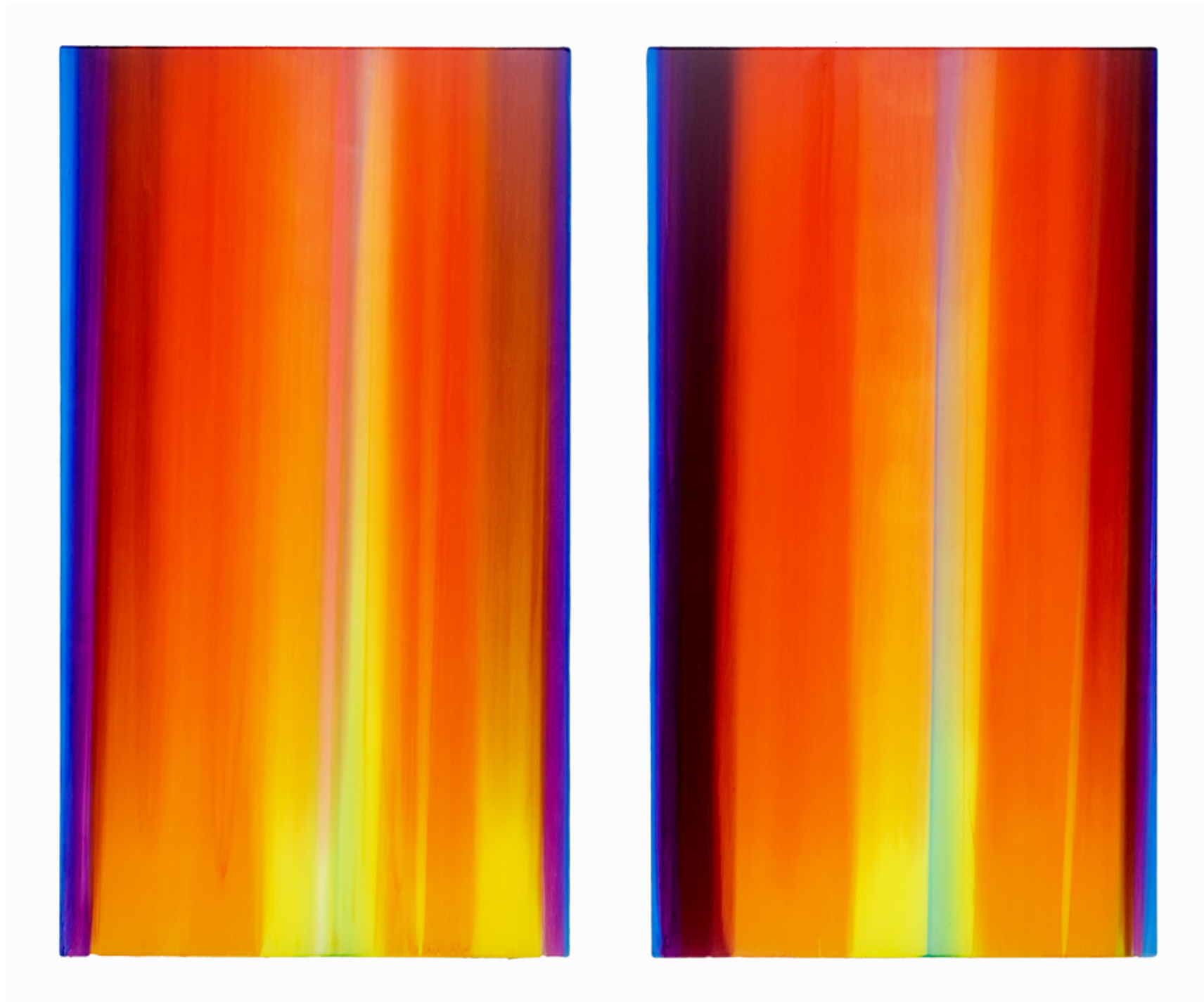


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Reckon Our Days, 2023

Polymer, pigment on cast acrylic

21 x 18 inches



Gregg Renfrow

Adventures in Storyland - 1 and 2, 2023

Polymer, pigment on cast acrylic

48 x 57 inches (both), 48 x 27 inches (each)



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Land of the Living, 2023

Polymer, pigment on cast acrylic

48 x 48 inches



Gregg Renfrow

Field of the Forest, 2023

Polymer, pigment on cast acrylic

48 x 48 inches



Gregg Renfrow

In The Rolling Wind, 2023

Polymer, pigment on cast acrylic

51 x 42 inches



Gregg Renfrow

The Current, 2023

Polymer, pigment on cast acrylic

48 x 48 inches

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