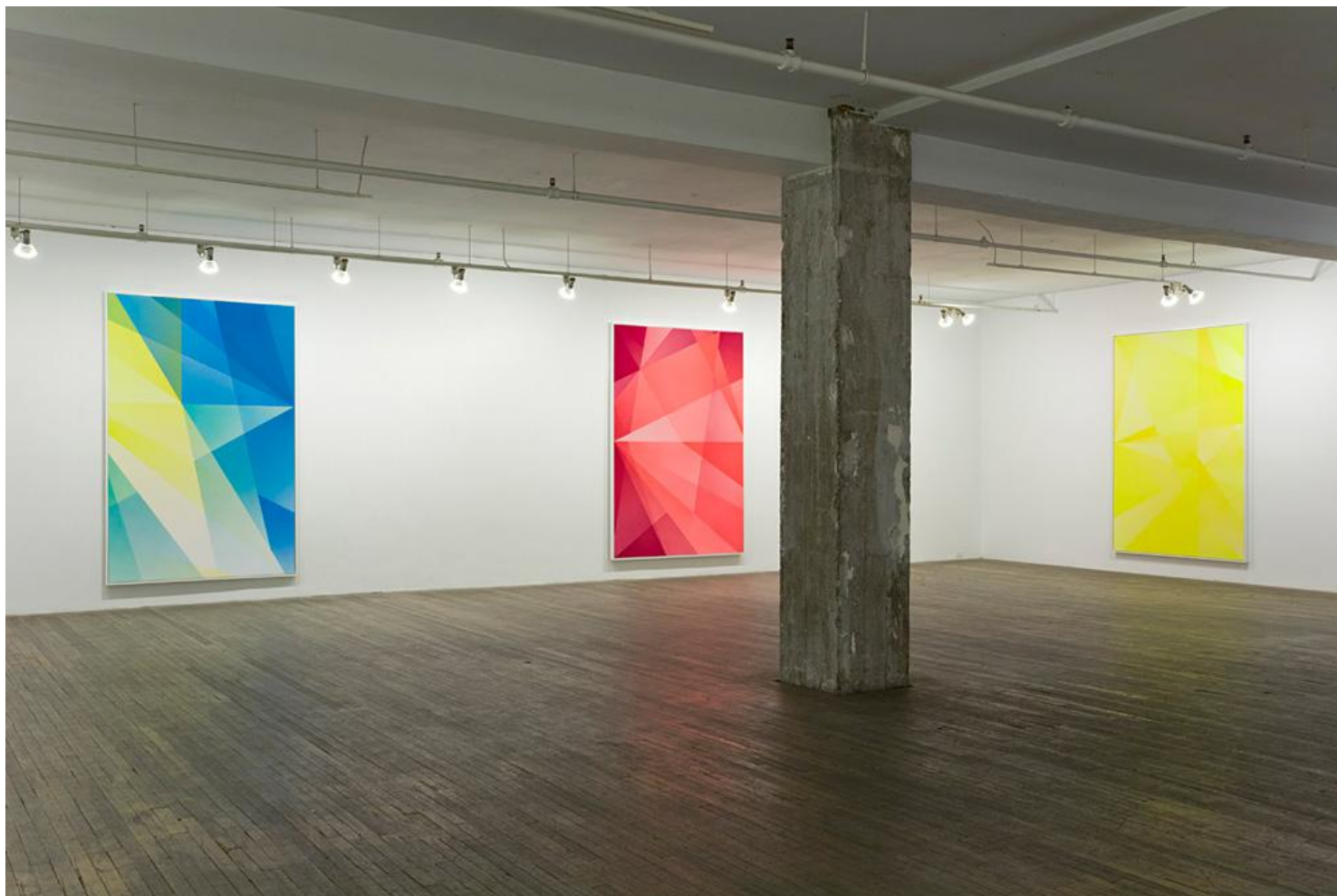


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Marie-Claire Blais: Interstellar Overdrive

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Light, or more specifically, luminosity, is the driving concern for Montreal artist [Marie-Claire Blais](#). In recent series such as *L'Hiver vient de l'ouest* from 2008 and *Tandis que le soleil brille* from 2009, Blais played with the angles and abstractions of refracted light in drawings of intersecting architectural forms that delicately resolve out of neutral greys and blacks. These works are a study in contrasts; in them, notions of existence and immateriality collide in geometries of light and shadow.

Blais shifts this study of luminous form into overdrive with *Densité neutre*, a new series of large-scale, hyper-colour canvases currently on view at [Galerie René Blouin](#). The impact is immediate: Where her earlier works are meticulously rendered and quietly poetic, these new canvases explode with colour and gestural energy. Blais' working process—which she considers a performative exercise—offers some explanation. Starting from a grid and using an auto-industry spray gun, Blais has painted overlapping triangular forms in geometric sequence, building colour and form in response to light, space and the physicality of her equipment.



Marie-Claire Blais at work in her studio / photo Pascal Grandmaison

That's not to say that these performative gestures are spontaneous. Blais refers to these new works as “drawings,” which points back to an abiding interest in compositional control. Considering the radiant use of colour in these works, it is this sense of structure—layer upon layer of geometric form—that ultimately controls the painted surface, capturing rather than emitting a luminous effect. There's a temptation here to refer to the spiritual or universal dynamism sought by painters such as [Lawren Harris](#) or [Mark Rothko](#). Blais explains it as a search for the “temporality of light” and the notion of light as pure information, a kind of stellar history of existence. (372 rue Ste-Catherine O #501, Montreal QC)

- www.galeriereneblouin.com



Marie-Claire Blais *Densité neutre 10* and *Densité neutre 11* 2009 / photo Richard-Max Tremblay
