

BROADWAY

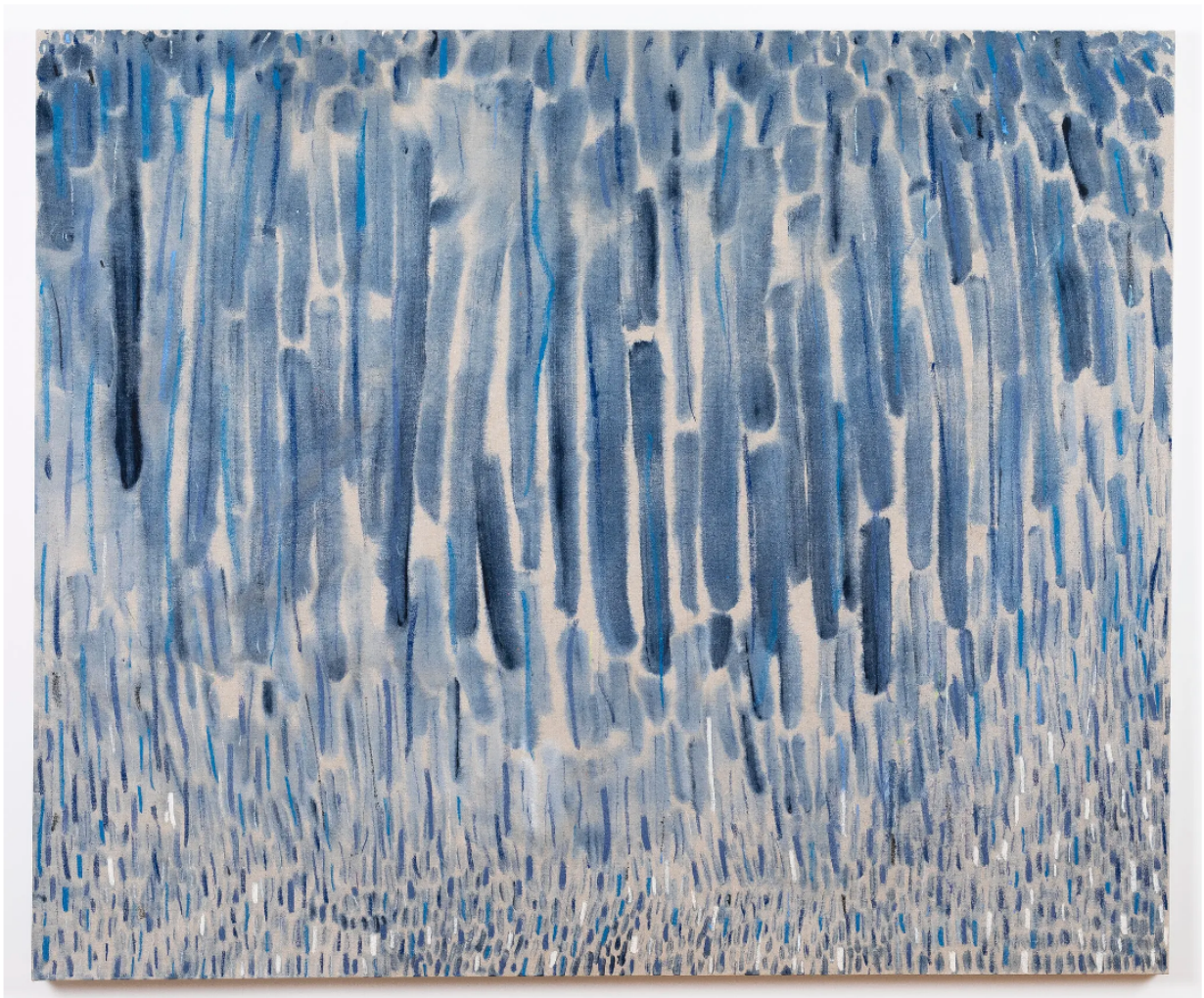
The New York Times

ART & DESIGN | What to See in N.Y.C. Galleries Right Now

TRIBECA

John Riepenhoff

Through July 15. Broadway Gallery, 373 Broadway, Manhattan. 212-226-4001;
broadwaygallery.nyc.



John Riepenhoff's "Skies," 2022, in the show "Milwaukee Nights and Decoys" at Broadway Gallery. via John Riepenhoff and Broadway Gallery

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John Riepenhoff likes to paint the sky in plein-air. He's done it all over the world, but the paintings currently [showing at Broadway Gallery](#) were made in his hometown, Milwaukee, where he also runs a space of his own, Green Gallery.

They range in size from 2 by 3 feet to 7 by 8 feet, use oil, acrylic and sometimes flashe, and are all titled "Skies." One is covered with a reticulated pattern; another shows a vertical rain of vigorous long dashes. All of them make a monochrome impression of smoky gray-blue, though Riepenhoff uses various tones to achieve this effect, including smudges of pink and orange in the background and the occasional tiny dot of bright yellow or purple.

They're not literally figurative, but you can't definitively call them nonfigurative, either. By rendering his blots and dashes in a single, variable color that leaves plenty of unprimed gray linen exposed, what Riepenhoff succeeds in depicting isn't the look of the open sky, but its feel — its emptiness, its paradoxical density, the weird spiritual disquiet you may experience when staring into something infinite and intangible.

He's also succeeded in assembling one of the more stylistically coherent shows I've seen in quite a while, a suite of paintings that feel like the healthy elaboration of a single idea. Two naïve little ceramic owls, one perched on the gallery's desk and one over the door, add a charming accent. *WILL HEINRICH*