

# MODERN PAINTERS

## REVIEW: Andrew Holmquist at Carrie Secrist Gallery

By Jason Foubert for *Modern Painters* 2 October 2013



(l-r) Andrew Holmquist's "Basketball Goldfish" and "Total Fitness," 2013  
(Courtesy the artist and Carrie Secrist Gallery, Chicago )

Must gay painting be flamboyant? Holmquist tries on various visual tropes from the pantheon of homosexual modernists in "Marco (Polo)," his second solo exhibition at the gallery. He dips into Hockney's squiggle-line swimming pools and Bacon's spare rooms of quivering meat. The titles are cheeky, such as those of the diptych *Give and Receive* and a pink-light installation called *Rosy Fingered Dawn* (all works 2013), as if innuendo were part of the queer gene.

Large gestural abstract canvases are typically the purview of the confident, the cocky, and the young, and Holmquist satisfies this painterly fantasy by flexing his formalist muscles with cheerful, colorful, and sometimes decorative flourishes.

It's all part of the visual lexicon of being a young, urban gay man today. Although there is little fear or shame in that identity, Holmquist inserts covert or coded imagery within his abstract geo-gestural planes, as if rediscovering what makes queer art, as a genre and a practice, different. Preserving this secret language is akin to preserving a tradition. But unexpectedly, and with talent, Holmquist's "phantom geisha" series of ink-jet prints moves the conversation to the realm of advertising culture. In an illustrational style, and

a restricted red and blue palette, the artist half-censors, half-adorns naked bodies with ambiguous but chic designs, proceeding into a more contemporary queer iconography.