



THOMAS PAQUETTE

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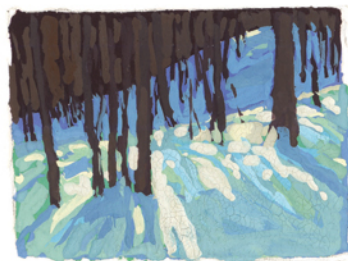
GOUACHES

THOMAS PAQUETTE

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GOUACHES

essay by SALLY MANSFIELD



*Veil of Snow, 1992*

# Thomas Paquette / Gouaches

by Sally Mansfield

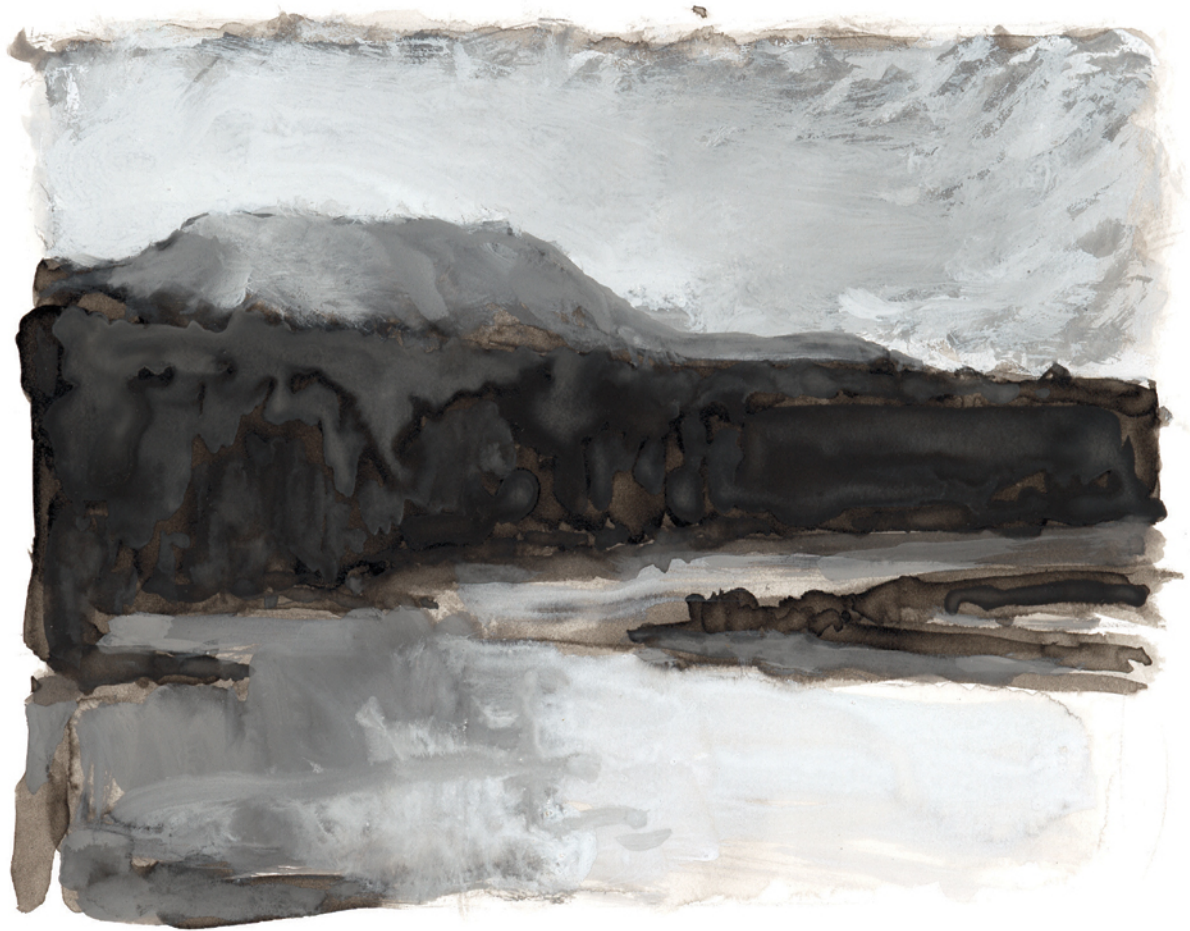
For those familiar with Thomas Paquette's oil paintings, the most surprising thing about his gouaches is their size. Ranging from 2 x 1 ¼ inches for *Clouds Over Moosehead Lake* (page 13) to 5½ x 7¼ inches for *Katahdin from the Penobscot River* (page 23), they are quite remarkably small, especially for a painter whose works can span many feet. These 'color notes' did not have to be small because they were done in gouache; Edouard Vuillard (1868-1940), an artist that Paquette admires, created *Place St. Augustin* (Metropolitan Museum, New York) in a format measuring five by six feet. It is interesting to consider what the small format requires of the artist. Immediately the work becomes intimate and personal. The focus changes to detail, and each mark becomes more significant, even essential. Form must be analyzed, distilled, and simply rendered. A different set of creative muscles must be exercised.

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In terms of technique, Paquette's working method remains rather the same in gouache as in oil. He continues to over-paint and rework, adjust and revise, reveling in the process. He has a Janus-like duality of vision: experiencing nature, experiencing the creative process of painting from the inspiration, experiencing the painting, which inspires him to return to the creative process. This continuing dialogue with the painting leads to an abstracted method of working in which the artist goes from what he is seeing, to evoking in paint what is seen, seeing the evocation, and making it into a new thing seen. The initial inspiration and connection is a love of the landscape, but the result is largely about the process and painting, creating an overall color balance and patterning in what have been described as color cells. The two dimensional surface realities of the painting structure must resonate with the artist's sensibility. Light is an organizing force; first light illuminates the thing seen, and the artist renders light through color. Paquette works in layers, like a geological formation, adding, taking away, letting earlier colors peek through, until light actually seems to emanate from within the painting, and the small gouaches glow like gems.

Ironically, the painter who suggested that Paquette try gouache as a means of freeing him from his habit of overpainting, just supplied a new medium to Paquette's method. Gouache, like watercolor, is made of pigment suspended in water. Gouache, however, has larger particles and

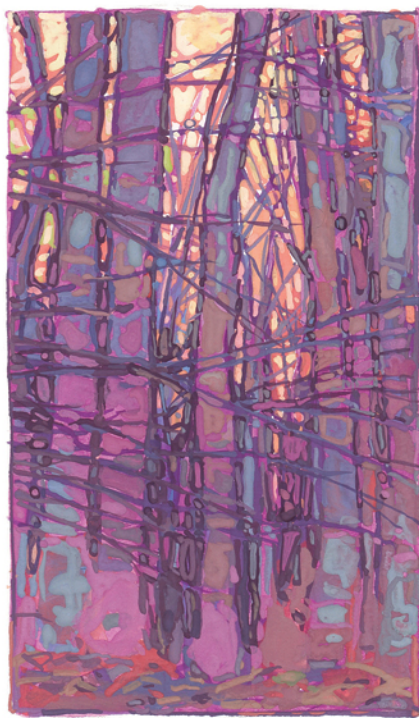




*Katahdin from the Penobscot River, 5½ x 7¼ inches, 1996*



*Retreating Sea, 2001*



*Pearl Trees, 2004*



*Curved Coast, 2002*





*Mud Puddle, Wales, 2006*



*Monolith, Acadia National Park, 2005*



*Sheep at Sundown, Lesvos, 1999*



*Allegheny Road, 2002*



*Guardians of Light, 2004*