



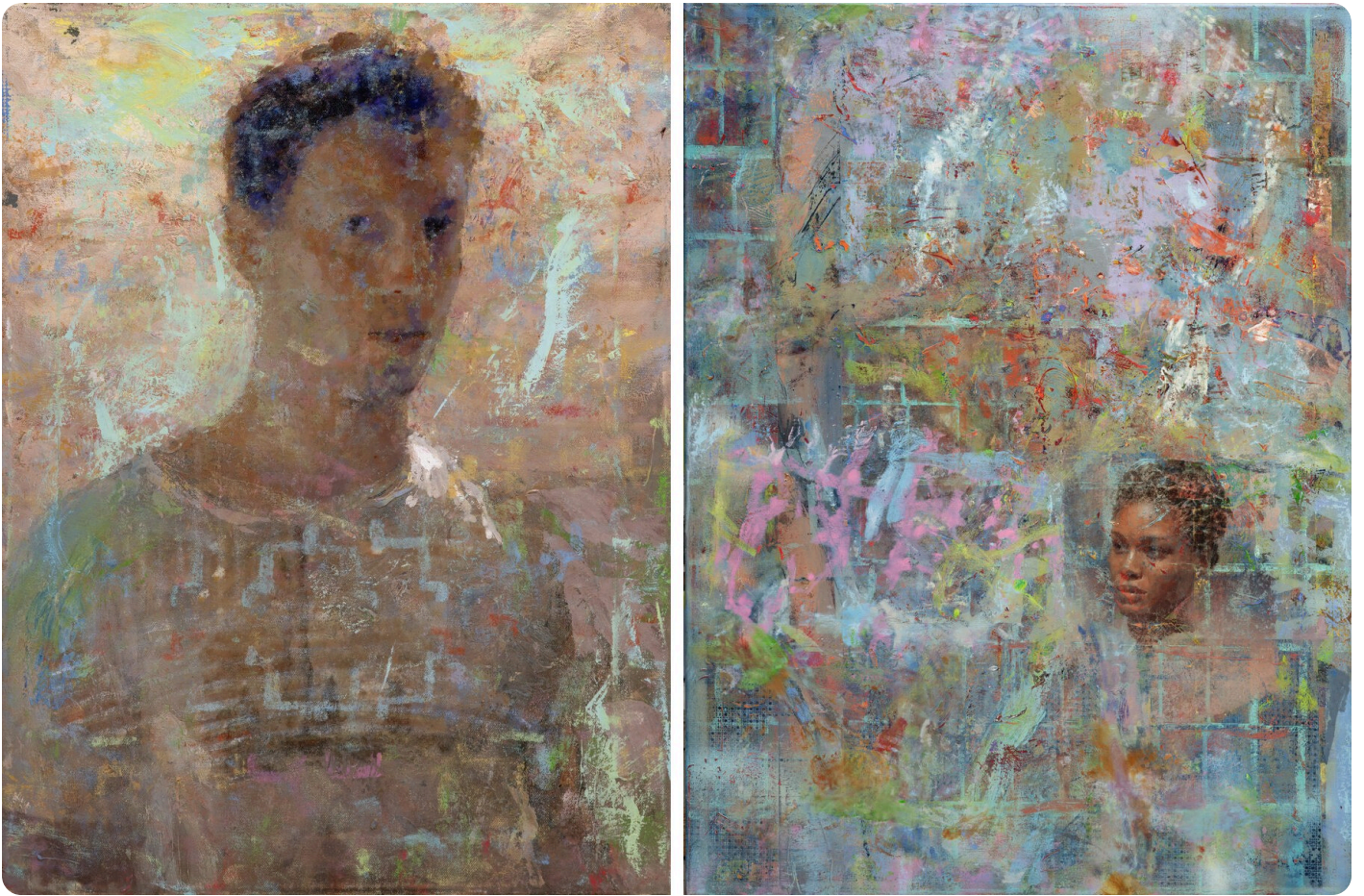
GALLERIES & MUSEUMS

Nick Weber Bridges the Abstract & the Real at Grenning Gallery in Sag Harbor

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 By Oliver Peterson





"There's a Blue Light" (self-portrait) and "Ask Alice" by Nick Weber

A master of figurative painting and realism, Springs artist **Nick Weber** is exploring something quite different with his new exhibition at **Grenning Gallery** in Sag Harbor (26 Main Street). The show – which shares space with a wonderful selection of paintings by **Marc Dalessio** and is on view through May 5 – presents a remarkable body of work using a technique of Weber's own invention.

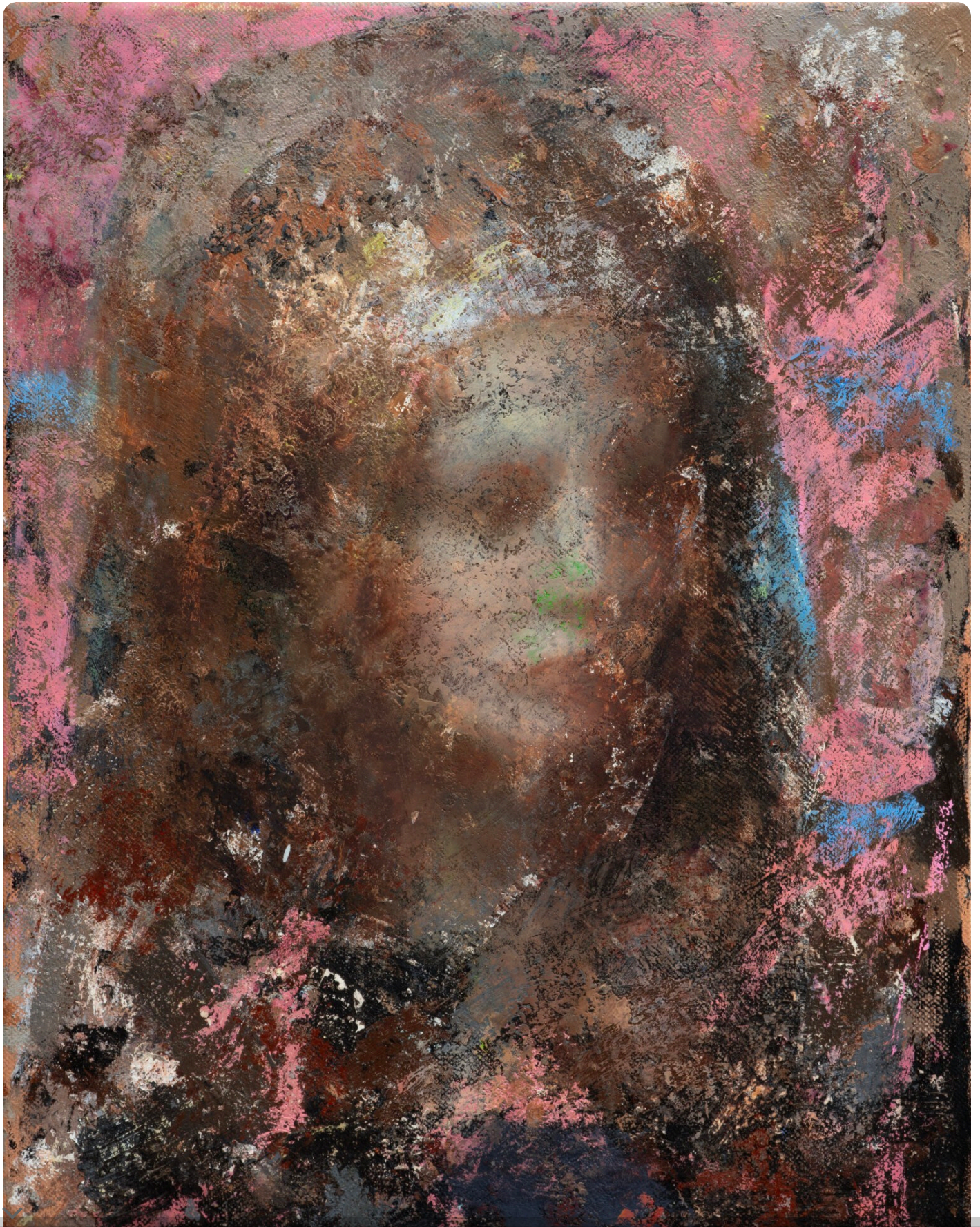
And as Weber points out, abstraction isn't what most people think of when it comes to Grenning Gallery. "I've known Laura Grenning for a long time ... she's always shown these academic paintings from Florence and these ateliers where they paint realism in an academic way," he explains. "She's always seen that I'm representational realism and she liked my work, but it's never been a



“She came and did a studio visit in the fall and she said, ‘Hey, I like what you’re doing,” Weber says, recalling her unexpected attraction to his abstract paintings, which he started about a decade ago but never showed, aside from including one piece in a large group exhibition at Tripoli Gallery.

“I became aware of Weber’s paintings many years ago,” Grenning says. “He registered in my mind as one of the finest painters working on the East End at the time. I was intrigued, but alas, he had good representation at the time, so I pushed my curiosity about his work aside,” she continues, adding, “I was very pleased when I got word that he had stopped by the gallery last summer with his new baby and mentioned that he might be open to talking about working together. A conversation and several studio visits later, I am very pleased to be opening his first show with Grenning Gallery!”





In truth, Weber admits his pieces are closer to a hybrid of realism and abstraction, especially when it comes to how they are made. "I sort of invented a technique years ago that I've been using where I paint on a piece of plastic and press it to the canvas, and then I have another pressing left in it," he says, describing the next pressing as more "ghostlike."

The resulting oil paintings, which often only hold faint whispers of the paintings from which they are made, are colorful compositions loaded with layer upon layer of paint, sanded down and re-applied and sanded again over the course of years. "I'm building them up and then I'm sanding it down. It's like a cyclical process almost of creation and destruction," Weber says.



In her statement about the show, Grenning says, “The overall effect is an intriguing blend of classical and contemporary, serious figurative art and whimsical, colorful abstraction.” She points out that Weber’s mastery of form and his skill with a brush would make it possible to confuse his work with “a gorgeous fresco on a newly excavated villa wall in Italy,” except, “A 21st century palette of bright (and sometimes neon) color bursts are the only thing indicating it is indeed a 21st century master at work.”





The subjects, too, appear as classical figures with modern touches, as well as some scenes from the artist's own life and others depicting more traditional imagery. "Hallelujah," for example, represents the Biblical story of Bathsheba and King David, as Rembrandt also painted, but instead of holding a paper, the nude Bathsheba (represented by *Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue* model Bridget Hall who sat for Weber) looks at a cellphone in her hand as a loosely rendered David looks down at her from his tower.

Many of the paintings also contain shimmering geometric patterns, very much like what one sees behind one's eyelids while taking psychedelic drugs – which is no easy feat to recreate.





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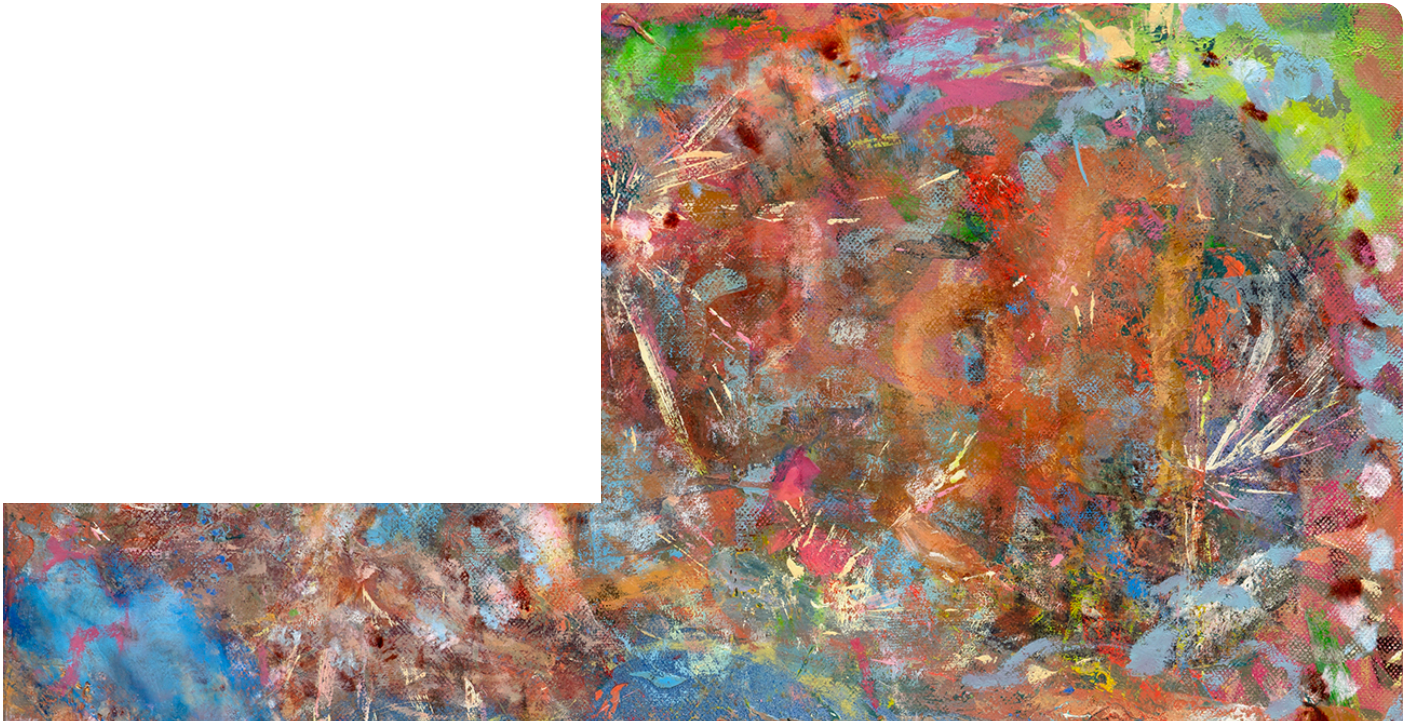


...ot of that comes from the ayahuasca ceremonies,” Weber says, adding his experiences to the work. “I started to get into these psychedelic colors, although I don’t see them as psychedelic, I see them adds.

magnificently realistic, deeply abstract, or a sting what is true and valuable to him. “It’s use there’s so little intimacy and connection is a process that’s slow and caring and it,” he says.

more of Nick Weber’s work and to get a look essio.





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