

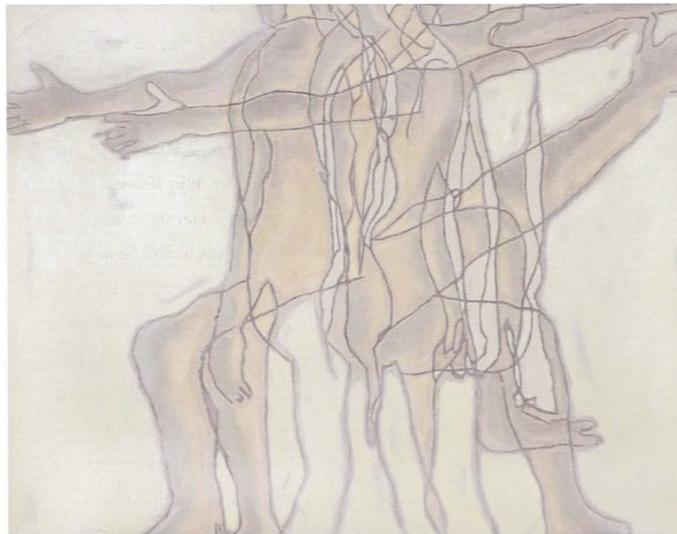
# WASHBURN

## Tom Levine: New Paintings March 27 to May 10, 2014

*Levine to show the first figure-inspired paintings of his career*

*“There’s a magic in Tom Levine’s paintings that haunts us as we see them and that continues in memory. We can almost imagine that the figures outlined on these glowing canvases will continue to move and assume new positions long after the painter has finished his work and long after we, the enchanted viewers, have left the room.”*

Francine Prose



*Travis II, 2012, oil on linen, 50 ½ x 64 in.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - New York, NY – Opening on March 27 at New York City’s Washburn Gallery (20 West 57<sup>th</sup> Street), the American artist Tom Levine will exhibit new works. His first significant gallery show in New York since 2010 and his fifth with the Washburn Gallery, it will include 10 paintings, eight small constructions, and six large drawings.

The show represents a major turning point in Levine’s career. Long known for his expressive, muted and geometric abstractions, these new works mark the first time Levine has painted from the human figure. For these new paintings, friends have modeled in front of the canvas and a bright light to have their silhouettes traces and retraced. The result is a sense of movement and dynamism that is not often present in figurative painting.

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While these new paintings are a departure for Levine, they are, in many ways, an extension of themes and interests that have been present in his work for years. “My last exhibit at Washburn included works constructed with wire or string laced across the front of the paintings and attached to a perimeter frame which projected a few inches from the edge of the painting. The wire made wonderful linear shadows on the flat painted surface that would change constantly, depending on the light source,” said Levine when describing his interest in figurative painting. “These new pieces are a continuation of this curiosity about light, shadows and reflections. I trace the silhouettes of my models with charcoal or graphite on the linen. Each time the model changes position, a new silhouette on the same painting is traced. This is repeated many times. Then I continue alone, using the drawn lines as a basis for adding oil pigment.”

In the show’s catalogue text, the acclaimed American novelist Francine Prose describes Levine’s answer to the problem of portraying the human figure in two dimensions in the following way:

*Ever since humans began representing living creatures in art, artists have faced the ultimate technical-spiritual challenge: how to portray, simultaneously, the body and the soul . . . In this remarkable series of paintings, Tom Levine has found an original and ingenious solution to a problem as old as art. His models pose against the canvas; the artist traces their silhouettes. The model moves, and another outline is superimposed over the first until we cannot fail to notice that the artist and the model have not (as is more often the case) collaborated in choosing a single posture in which the figure will be frozen forever. What’s striking and somehow eerie is how fully present and alive the models appear to be in the outline that remains to mark their near proximity to the canvas, how much of their spirits seem to remain and reside in the heavily altered yet faithful record of the process by which the painting was made. . . . There’s a magic in Tom Levine’s paintings that haunts us as we see them and that continues in memory. We can almost imagine that the figures outlined on these glowing canvases will continue to move and assume new positions long after the painter has finished his work and long after we, the enchanted viewers, have left the room.*

## **About Tom Levine**

Tom Levine was born and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio. He received a B.A. in English and business at Miami University (Oxford, Ohio), a master’s degree in psychology and communications from The University of Denver and an M.F.A. in art history from the University of Cincinnati. Levine is represented by the Washburn Gallery in New York and Galerie Fred Jahn in Munich. He lives and works in New York.

## WASHBURN GALLERY

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