

reviews: new york

Eric Zener

Gallery Henoch

There were many paintings of placid figures above and below water in this fascinating exhibition. Eric Zener revels in the deep turquoises and phthalo blues native to seas and lakes. Yet, close examination reveals that the glowing hues of the water are seldom reflected in the figures' flesh tones. By painting figures that appear illuminated by tungsten light, rather than by light passing through water, Zener creates strange aquatic environments.

In *Friendship* (2013), two men plunge into the sea, their bodies creating a vertical and horizontal axis that completely halts the downward momentum of the



Eric Zener, *Friendship*, 2013, oil on canvas, 82" x 74". Gallery Henoch.

dive. They are modeled in warm umbers and painted in dramatic chiaroscuro.

The woman in *Outstretched* (2013) glides across the bottom of a lake, passing through a viridian fog. Her skin is awash in warm and neutral hues rather than the soothing greens that envelop her. These bodies and environments do not seem to exist in the same space. The bands of color are inflected with different palettes of oranges and aquamarines, for example. Each figure and its surrounding scene has a separate color scheme.

The most unusual work here was *A Merging Into* (2012), which depicts the surface of water broken by two floating figures.

Almost conjoined at their crowns, the bodies drift symmetrically, reflecting each other at the center of the canvas, as if in mirror image. Fragments of peach ripple away from the bodies and fade into the water. Zener establishes a puzzling tension among man, woman, and the vast expanses of sky and ocean.

—Greg Lindquist