

## April 28, 2014, Featured Articles, Previews

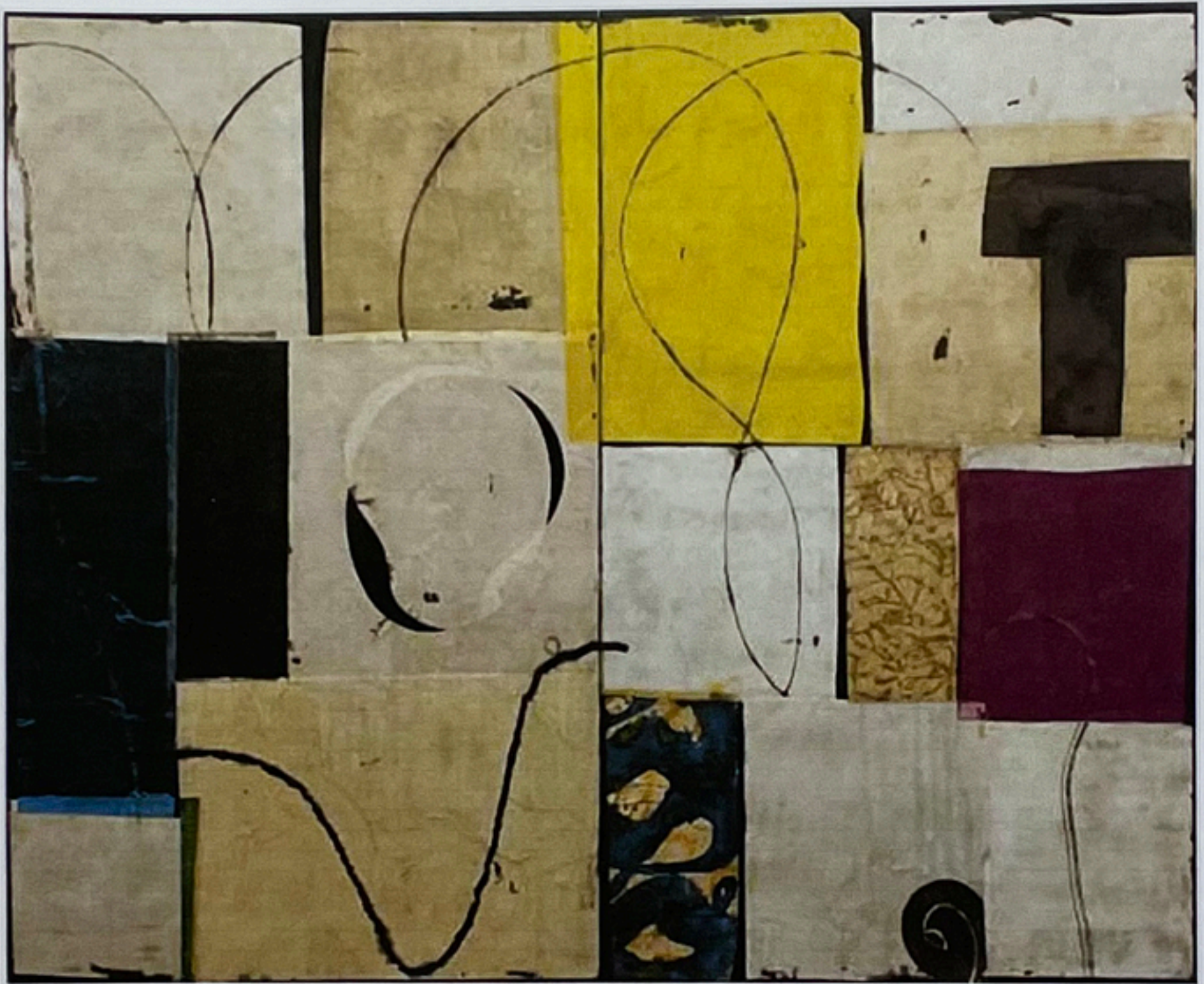
# Michel Alexis: Lost and Found

*Mon, Apr 28, 2014*

*An exhibition of new work by New York and Paris-based painter Michel Alexis. Opens May 3 at Ruth Bachofner Gallery.*

Michel Alexis' artwork is founded on an interface between painting and writing, where canvases hold impressions of his surrounding urban environment. In his earlier work, Alexis appropriated actual text from poetry and other writings. He continues to explore the written word in his current work, but in a more abstract manner, where words and letters are drained of specificity, and occupy a strictly formal space. Alexis distills actual text into linear movements across textured surfaces, echoing the motion and form of writing.

As Alexis adapts the physical act of writing, he creates his own distinct visual vocabulary. Improvisational gestures of



sweeping, calligraphic marks are set into a loose system of geometry, formed through a buildup of paint, paper, burlap and other textural material. These jostling rectangles wrinkle and crease as they abut one another, or shift to reveal fissures of substrate color. While not always in harmony, layers of gesso and oil paint are made rich by contrast: at once gritty and fluid, rough and polished, forceful and placid. Alexis draws strongly on experiences of the urban environment, transferring moments, moods, hesitation and experiences of the day onto large-scale canvases.

In *Absence* and *Eros*, art critic Robert Morgan writes, "What I gather from Alexis' paintings is a sense of space whereby the linear elements function as a kind of undergarment that does not impose its sense of Eros on the body of the painting. Rather, it gently and indirectly gives the surface a distinctly erotic tone, heightening the desire to optically attend to the surface, to move into it, to become part of it."