

CANADIANART

See It

Graham Gillmore: Family Matters

MONTE CLARK GALLERY, TORONTO AUG 25 TO SEP 18 2011

by RICHARD RHODES



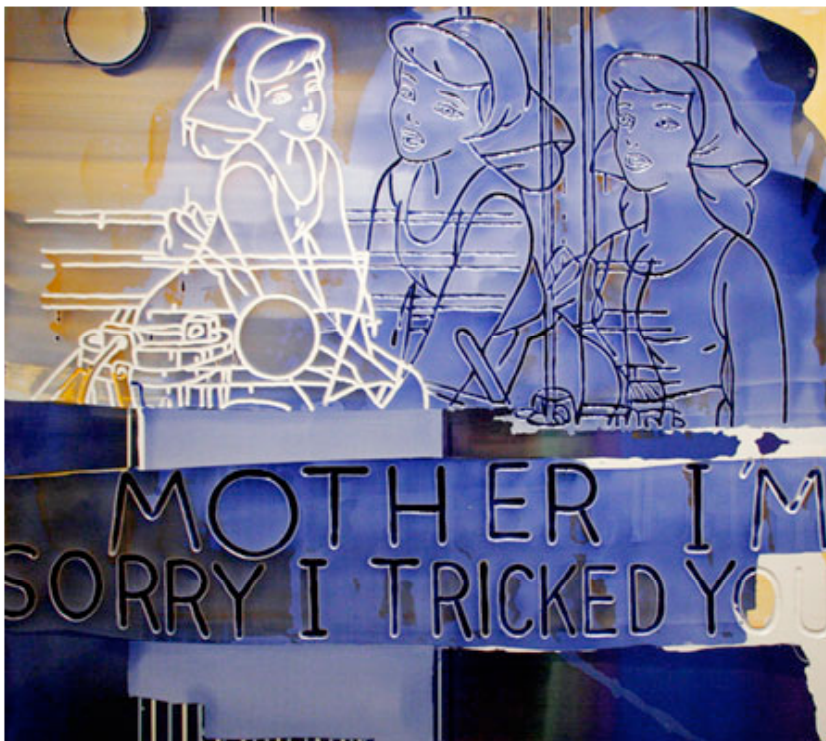
Graham Gillmore *Look at Me When I'm Speaking to You (Diptych)* 2011 Courtesy the artist and Monte Clark Gallery

Graham Gillmore—he of glistening, routed-letter painting fame—has a way with words. He picks up phrases from an ether of greeting cards, dinner conversations and childhood memories to give them new life inside big, bold painted objects. The paintings hang heavy on the wall, but they show off mysterious liquid depths that hold references to ripe histories of abstraction and colour-field painting. It's a complicated confrontation, and Gillmore handles it with increasing sophistication. In his new show "Expectations," the paintings have a commanding finesse matched by language that is also, often, literally commanding. *Pencil me out*, they read; or *Look at me when I'm speaking to you* or *Try not to live up to all my expectations*.



Graham Gillmore *Expectations, 1 (Dptych)* 2011 Courtesy the artist and Monte Clark Gallery

Locked into Gillmore's friendly, open font is the ironically toned voice of a bossy, disgruntled authority figure; it rides the sliding planes of colour like recurrent memories of parental complaint. The painting reading *Mother, I'm sorry I tricked you* registers like a proud riposte from a canny survivor. This familial context works nicely as a metaphor for painting's own fraught generational growth from a high modern era to a postmodern one. In his way, Gillmore is the archivist of how wounded discontent can spur a reactive balm of cultural production and beauty. In a note for the exhibition, he mentions an abiding interest in "flawed communication" that shapes his work. Flawed it may be, but in this show it also reads as essential.



Graham Gillmore *Untitled (Cinderella, 2nd Version)* 2011 Courtesy the artist and Monte Clark Gallery