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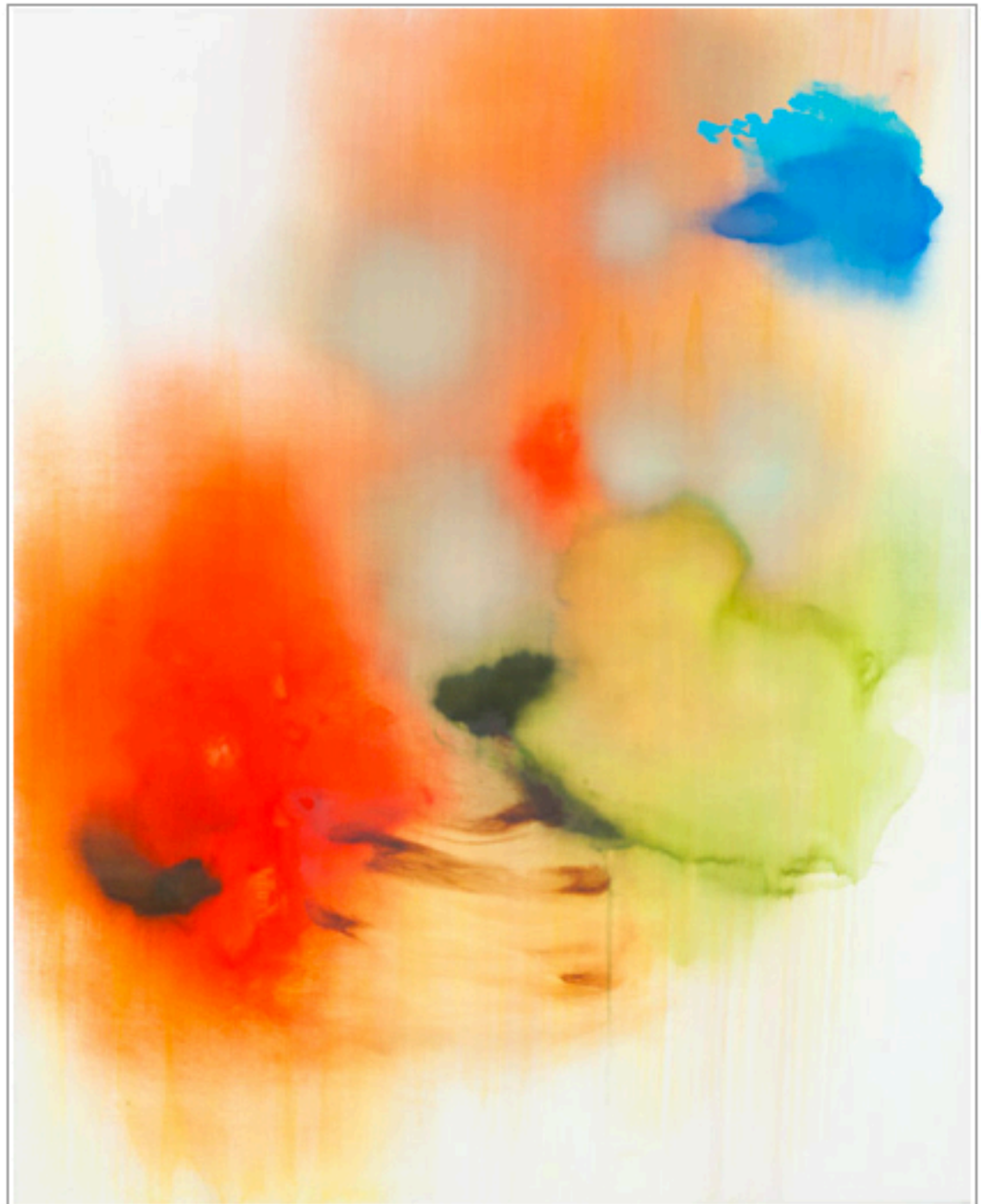
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Halo

Posted by [Andrew Frost](#) • October 12, 2012 • [Printer-friendly](#)

From [Andrew Frost](#)...

In [Marisa Purcell's](#) latest show everything you need to know is in its title. Across a series of large canvases acrylic and oil paints coalesce in great pools of colour, delicate interactions and mergers of paint, all abstract but rich with possible association. The title draws us to a number of possible readings: a halo is that luminous ring or disc around the heads of saints in icon painting, yet is also that ephemeral band of light around the sun or moon, a chimerical ring created by the reflection of light in ice particles floating in the upper atmosphere. In both instances, a halo is created by something apart, a visual effect that can only exist in tandem with another object, yet one absent to the eye: Purcell's show suggests that the paintings are in a sense the result of a secondary effect, the beautiful residue of the effector, rather like a rainbow without the storm, the aura of the religious or the unseen presence of dark matter.



Purcell is a skillful painter for whom surface is everything. In past exhibitions her work has created a delicate balance between subtle, gestural marks and the staining of the canvas, and in *Halo* she has taken this approach to a large yet subtle scale. In the most dramatic of the works it's almost possible to see into the canvases, as though the color fields were cloudbanks, while the more subdued works avoid illusionistic space for the delicate touch of pure surface. Like the halos of kirlian photographs, all life is here, you just have to be able to see it.

Until November 4

[Tim Olsen Gallery](#), Paddington.

Pic: [Marisa Purcell](#), *Punctuated*, 2012. Acrylic and oil on linen, 120x95cms. Courtesy of the artist and [Tim Olsen Gallery](#).