

Painter's architectural work builds on a witty foundation

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Scott Ingram leans his 12-foot "I-beam" against a gallery wall. Whitewashed poplar, it is satiny and translucent, an objet d'art. Nearby, a photograph of North Carolina woods is blown up to monumental proportions. Secured to its center is a linear construction — the "DeKalb Avenue Firestation," rendered as colorful planes against a backdrop of unspoiled land.



The elements of 'Case Study House #2' echo the architecture of its midcentury subject matter in playful abstracted form.

"It's all about modernism," says Ingram of "Building Futures." Known for his luscious drip paintings, in this exhibition the artist shows off his growing body of architectural work.

Inspired primarily by midcentury "Case Study Houses" — modern environments of the 1940s through '60s — Ingram refashions buildings into rectilinear abstractions. He distills line and volume into drawings, configures rectangles out of wood or board, then prepares and paints surfaces.

Ingram is a true minimalist: He courts essential geometries, stacks structures, flirts with spatial arrangement, then turns to finishing and materials (often experimental) for his chromatic assemblages. The results are cool, rhythmic interpretations of rooflines, windows, doors — clear references to (and departures from) his originating subjects.

Jazzy and upbeat, "C.S.H. #2, Sumner Spaulding & John Rex" is a superb example of Ingram's finesse. Observing the building's northern and southern elevations, he creates a diptych of MDF. He sands, rubs, sprays, brushes and buffs his rectangles of raspberry, lime, orange, white and metallic blue. The effects are subtle; a brilliant, syncopated set of conjoined surfaces that alternately streak, pock, absorb or reflect light.

If "C.S.H. #2" sparkles as an enthusiastic banner for midcentury design, then the DeKalb Firestation stands as a symbol of the artist's concern for the facile eradication of beautiful spaces, man-made and natural. Ingram's paintings serve as skeletal markers of future remains, like visual arguments for vigilance. They advise: Respect the past; build futures wisely.