

THOMAS DANE GALLERY

Sharon Butler, "Arturo Herrera: Reading Abstraction," *Two Coats of Paint*, 13th August 2015



Few contemporary artists have a stronger urge to explore process and materiality than [Arturo Herrera](#), who is best known for his collages and large-scale drooping-felt abstractions. In "[Opener 29: Arturo Herrera — Day Before](#)," a delightful exhibition at the Tang this summer, Herrera presents 100 hardcover books that he has selected at flea markets and used as supports for small abstract paintings.

[Image at top: Arturo Herrera, *Untitled*, 2014, mixed media, 8 1/4 x 6 x 3/4 inches.]



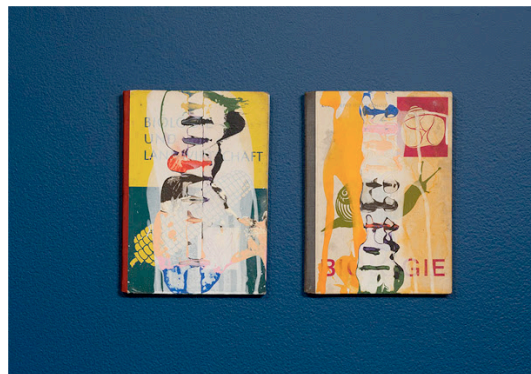
Arturo Herrera, *Untitled*, 2014, mixed media, 7 1/4 x 4 5/8 x 1/4 inches.

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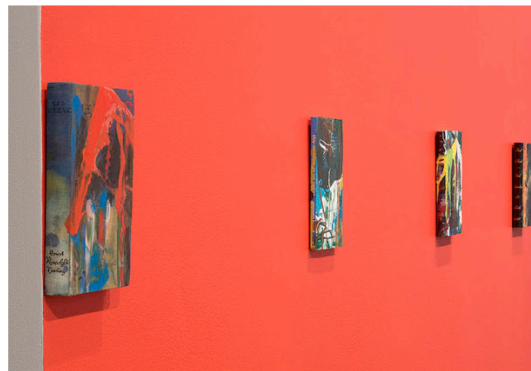
Antique painted books were on display alongside larger work in his [2014 solo show](#) at Sikkema Jenkins, but at the Tang, it's books and only books. The subject of each seems beside the point—some are about art, others are about music and sports, several are fiction, and a couple are instruction manuals.



The size, binding material, color, the position and structure of the cover (as opposed to the literary content of the book), and cover illustrations provide the visual cues to which Herrera responds, applying paint in drips, pours, daubs, spatters, and, sometimes, linear brushwork.

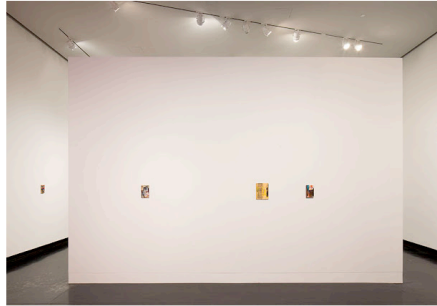


Installation view.



Installation view.

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Installation view.



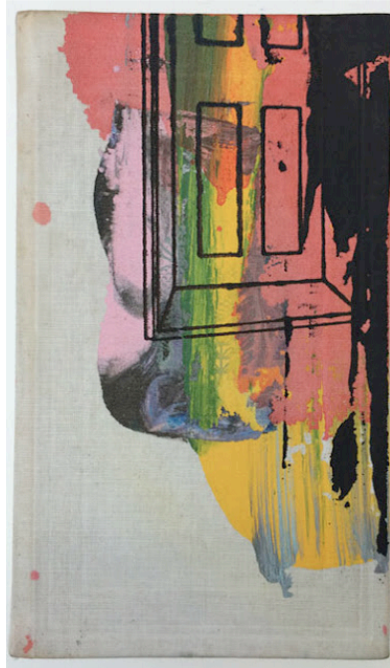
Arturo Herrera, *Untitled*, 2015, mixed media.



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Many of the books seem painted shut. Perhaps Herrera is prompting viewers (and artists) to stop reading and start looking. Can we read abstraction in the same way that we read text?

"[Opener 29: Arturo Herrera — Day Before](#)," organized by Ian Berry, Frances Tang Teaching Museum at Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY. Through August 23, 2015.

<http://www.twocoatsofpaint.com/2015/08/arturo-herrera-reading-abstraction.html>

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