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### Sky Glabush

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BY DAVID BALZER January 21, 2009 21:01

#### EDITORIAL RATING:

To Feb 7, Wed-Sat noon-6pm.  
MKG 127, 127 Ossington.  
647-435-7682. www.mkg127.com.

It is too often a prosaic thing to stand in front of a painted wintry landscape: is that all there is to Canadian art? Sky Glabush's explorations of the idiom are not dull in the slightest, but they are also not crude, gimmicky attempts to inject it with vigour. One might apply a degree of newness to his current exhibit at MKG 127 simply by noting its context and origins: Glabush teaches at the University of Western Ontario and here paints four views of mid-century modern houses now used as residences. (The show is entitled "Renting.") The views are devoid of figures, and show few if any traces of rowdy, undignified student behaviour (an exception might be Scaffold Jump, a back view of a house outfitted with the titular skateboarding contraption).

Truth is, Glabush is not out to accomplish much more than his influences – Jack Chambers and Greg Curnoe, both of whom also painted London – this in itself being a tall order which, in his statement, Glabush balks at a bit. Nonetheless, the meat of Glabush's efforts lies in textures and techniques. The paintings are large (ranging from four by seven to seven by 10 feet): predictably but successfully, Glabush uses tree branches as studies in line-making and begins with a colour wash, layering on subsequent landscape elements that become anchored to it as contrasts or complements. The two best works, both of the same house, are dazzling studies of the aesthetics of the Canadian climate. In White Out, tiny flakes cover the canvas in an intricate patina, vaguely suggesting Seurat, and warm light comes from inside the house through an entranceway window, its juxtaposition with the white-grey light outside vaguely suggesting Magritte. New Year (pictured) shows the house from farther away, coated in the pink of a sunset or sunrise. The humdrum, never a great topic for painting, does not really define either. As in Chambers, there is a gothic quality to suburban architecture's muted formal dialogue with the natural. Glabush himself puts it this way: "I am not entirely interested in the everyday, or the banal; I am more interested in the indeterminate space of a rental home: occupied, local, immediate, but transitional and slightly empty."

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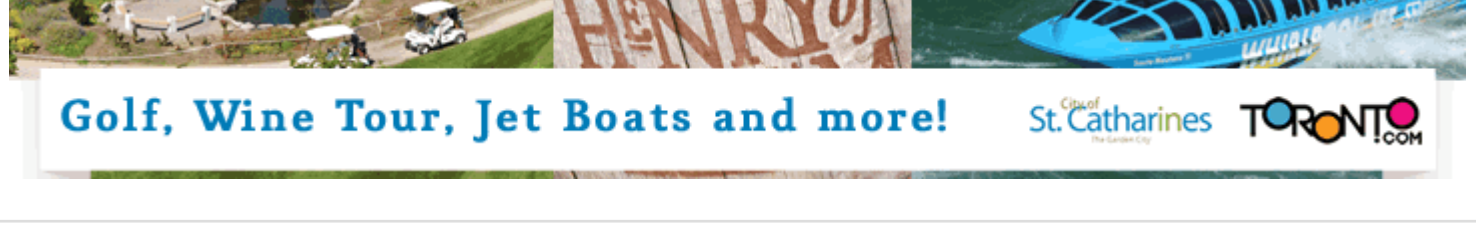
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