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Colin Chillag, "Portrait of Jenna Taking a Self Portrait," 2015, oil on canvas, 54 x 76 in. 101/EXHIBIT

## Colin Chillag: Painting (UN-)Finished

Jeffrey Carlson Reporting  
Editor, Fine Art Today

Colin Chillag's paintings are unique in giving viewers a taste of the precise realism of which the artist is capable, while simultaneously disrupting the mood of perfection that a completed hyper-realistic painting achieves.

Phoenix-based artist Colin Chillag works up some portions of his canvases to a highly detailed level of naturalism while leaving other parts untouched or scarring them with abstract marks. Yes, his work is technically fascinating, but it is also deeply thoughtful, consistently playing with the juxtaposition of realism and abstraction, the concept of the frame, or limits, of an image, and the interchange between painting, photography, and the separate life they depict. One can read Chillag's paintings as a microcosm for the heights of eloquence and the roots of base emotion that form two equally necessary aspects of human expression.

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### GALLERY & EVENT CALENDAR

March 4: ADAA Art Show

March 5: Sheri Bakes Floral Landscapes

March 7: Panhandle-Plains Invitational Western Art Show and Sale

March 7: NatureWorks Art Show & Sale



March 2: Peter Egeli and Lisa Egeli Paintings

An exhibition for a family of artists displays landscapes and maritime scenes by father and daughter.

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Colin Chillag, "Man with Red Moustache," 2014-2015, oil on canvas, 18 x 24 in. 101/EXHIBIT

Recently, Chillag has received wide acclaim for his "anti-realistic" artworks. Chillag's painting "Desert Grave with Daily Schedule" (2013-2014) was chosen for inclusion in the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art's ambitious "State of the Art: Discovering American Art Now" exhibition, which featured juried works by contemporary American artists nationwide and ran from September 2014 through January of this year.



Colin Chillag, "Circle K Dawn," 2014, oil on canvas, 18 x 24 in. 101/EXHIBIT



Colin Chillag, "Circle K Dusk," 2014, oil on canvas, 18 x 24 in. 101/EXHIBIT

Next for the artist is a solo show at 101/EXHIBIT in Los Angeles that will debut this weekend, on

February 28. "**Colin Chillag: Anti-Realism**" opens with a reception that night from 7-10 p.m., and the show continues through April 18.

Within Chillag's paintings, the point at which realism dissolves and devolves into something else is especially intriguing. In terms of composition, the artist gives realism center stage, consistently developing the middle portion of the canvas to the highest level of finish. Along the periphery, spray-painted lines, lettering, or any form of abstract expression might act as an unconventional border.



Colin Chillag, "Being Towards Others (Poolside Therese)," 2013-2014, oil on canvas, 50 x 60 in. 101/EXHIBIT

Of course, to leave the paintings "unfinished" is a deliberate choice -- one that both contributes to their visual interest and signals the artist's unwillingness to mimic the ideal in a world that displays its reality all too often.



Colin Chillag, "Jenna Drinking," 2013-2014, oil on canvas, 54 x 72 in. 101/EXHIBIT

Born in Syracuse, New York, Chillag (b. 1971) earned his B.F.A. from the San Francisco Art Institute. He has exhibited across the country, though the artist recently received an impressive distinction in his hometown. The Phoenix Art Museum selected Chillag for a Mid-Career Artist Award, hosting a solo show for him in conjunction with the award. Chillag is represented in the permanent collections of the Scottsdale museum of Contemporary Art and the Arizona State University Art Museum.

To see more of Chillag's work, visit [101/EXHIBIT's website](#).

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