

## AT THE GALLERIES

## SHAPESHIFTING

Fall has officially begun, and so has the seasonal shifting of colours in the landscape. At galleries this week, three artists explore shifting colours in a more painterly way: Think beauty, not raking. Nice — and, as it turns out, also not.

BY LEAH SANDALS

**1. Harold Klunder at Clint Roenisch**  
944 Queen St. W.

A sign at Clint Roenisch says the gallery is open “Wodan’s Day to Saturn’s Day,” and the new show there, consisting of paintings by Harold Klunder, strikes a similar chord between the earthy and astrological. Klunder’s four massive paintings, each titled *Sun and Moon*, are very impressive. Their palettes are at times mossy, at times neon-bright, a combination that could threaten lesser paintings with the designation “mere exercises in 1970s retro.” Luckily, Klunder’s works are well-built to withstand time-based trends. You can look at these huge, complex paintings for a long time without getting tired or exasperated — a rare experience. Faces and figures appear and disappear in these paintings as one views them, a phenomenon that recalls looking at clouds in the sky or reflections on lake water. This rich visual experience is made possible thanks to Klunder’s terrific interplay of colour, texture and form in layers that are both deeply considered and deeply felt. It would seem that these paintings were very satisfying for Klunder to create, and it’s very satisfying taking them in as well. As both sprawling universes and contained material gestures, they are whole. To Oct. 26.

**2. Brendan Flanagan at Angell**  
Gallery

890 Queen St. W.  
Passersby outside of Angell Gallery have been doing many a double-take since Brendan Flanagan’s show went up. In addition to showing his glossy, oil-slick-like paintings inside the gallery, Flanagan’s window display seems to show a life-sized body crawling out of the primordial, Exxon-Valdez-flavoured murk of one

of his canvases. So liquid are Flanagan’s painterly effects, in fact, that you’d be forgiven for thinking most of his paintings — and the figures in them — could slither right off their substrates and onto the floor, puddling into a swampy, gasping mess. Instability rules substance as well as style here — Flanagan’s figures mostly seem to be dejected, dying or driven mad, and the settings feel apocalyptically dire. *Silent Spring*, zombie movies and Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road* are just a few of the poisonous molecules bubbling up within these troubling images. Fortunately, Flanagan does seem to include one moment of redemption — a canvas, *Lovers*, showing a nuclear-yellow couple’s glowing embrace through the branches of a denuded forest. Distressing, strange and important work. To Oct. 10.

**3. Balint Zsako at Katharine**  
Mulherin

1082 Queen St. W.  
Fans of Balint Zsako could be forgiven for feeling a bit let down when taking in his current exhibition, *Old Master Paintings*. The refined, poetic and slightly dark collages of classical painting imagery that Zsako presents here aren’t necessarily poor; in fact, they’re quite witty and measured. It’s just that they’re a far cry from the rawer, vibrant drawings for which Zsako is best known. Those looking for linking points might consider the artist’s skill at addressing myth and its visual manifestations: While Zsako’s drawings rework folkloric takes on sex, death, love and creation, his collages revamp Western art history’s favoured devices for exploring the same. Nonetheless, the show still unfortunately feels like a bit of a consolation prize. Better luck next time? To Oct. 18.

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COURTESY CLINT ROENISCH

A rich visual experience: Harold Klunder’s *Sun and Moon I*.