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[Skipping the palette: Artist discusses technique for works at Morristown gallery](#)

By Sharon Sheridan, Morristown Green correspondent

Examine the work of Asbury Park artist David French at the [Simon Gallery](#) in Morristown, and you'll notice lines of bright primary colors alongside more muted color blends spreading across the canvas.



A close up of the tube-applied strokes of paint on David French's "Secondary Gesture." Sharon Sheridan photo

“He starts by making brush strokes right out of a tube,” said **Harry Simon**, who owns the gallery with wife **Mary Ellen**. “There’s a simplicity to these paintings. There’s a definite excitement to them.” He sees those tube-applied strokes as almost like “exclamation points.”

Visitors can view 10 of French’s paintings at the gallery through Dec. 18, and they can meet the artist at a free reception at the Bank Street location tonight from 6 to 8. The show opened Nov. 16, in time for Tuesday’s inaugural [Art Around the Park](#) Morristown gallery tour.



Abstract expressionist David French's "Secondary Gesture," an oil painting on a 60- by 60-inch twill linen canvas, available for \$6,000 at the Simon Gallery. Sharon Sheridan photo

French created all 10 abstract-expressionist paintings this year. “For this body of work, I’ve been kind of skipping the palette and just squeezing the paint directly onto the surface and then manipulating the paint right on the canvas,” French said. He uses brushes, knives and Squeegees to mix and move the paint. “There may be some Squeegee marks where maybe I dig back into the surface to remove material or blend material.”

The technique provides a framework for his artistry, he explained. “By creating a structure in this way, it liberates me in the work. So the work is very sort of process-oriented with all these sort of flexible components. That allows me to have a consistent body of work that’s related but quite individual.”

“Years ago, I was working with sort of a different technique,” he said. “If you went to my loft in Asbury Park, you might see a retrospective of all the different series that I had been doing over the last 20 years or so.”



The twill linen canvas sports a herringbone pattern, highlighted here in part of the painting "Secondary Gesture," that artist David French finds inspiring. Sharon Sheridan photo

For the exhibited pieces, French used twill linen, which has a herringbone pattern. "I like it because of that inherent geometry that's being set up with the diagonal lines in the weave. I sort of responded to that geometry within the painted surface as well. The squeezed-out lines are all in a fairly diagonal sort of application. I reiterate the sort of substructure of the surface. It becomes self-referential in a way."



Gallery visitor Anne Johnston of Mendham with David French's painting "Yellow and Blue," now on exhibit at the Simon Gallery in Morristown. Sharon Sheridan photo

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