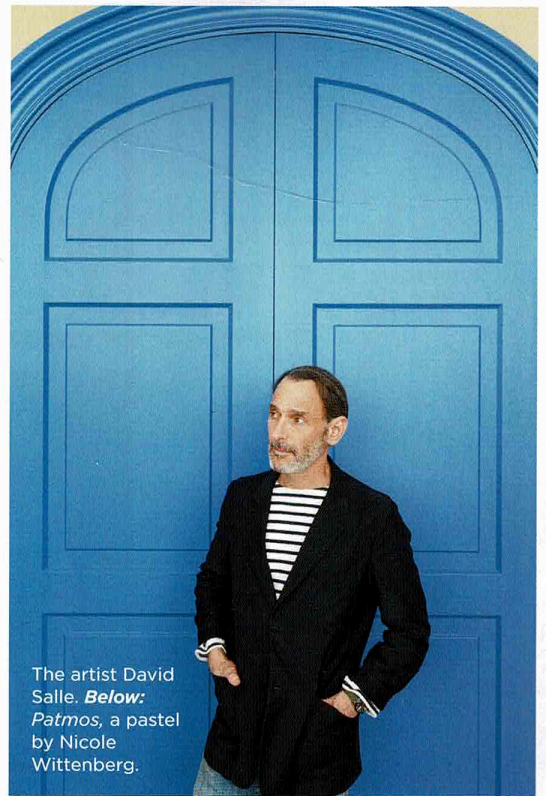
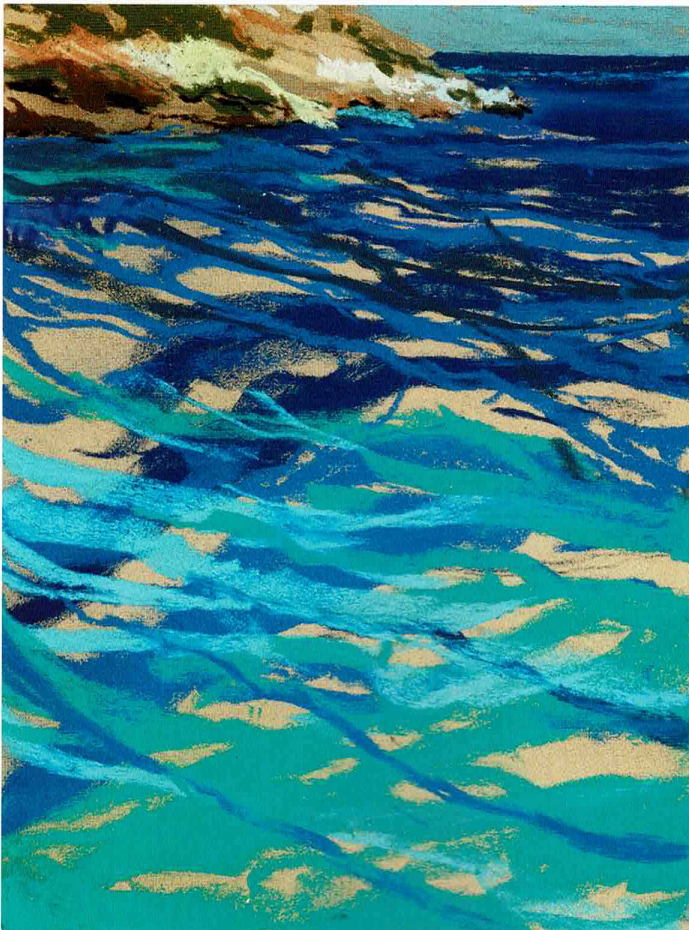


## ARTIST **DAVID SALLE** GIVES INSIGHT INTO THE RISING TALENT WHOSE PASTEL HE'S ADDED TO HIS HOME

My favorite thing is a pastel by Nicole Wittenberg, an artist whose work I've been following for a while and who is now starting to attract the kind of serious attention that indicates the market can't be far behind.

Pastel is a notoriously difficult medium—very few artists use it well. It's easy to overwork the surface, when the point is to keep things fresh and direct. One must choose carefully a few perfectly calibrated colors and lay them down with conviction, not trying to blend too much. On top of this, rendering water—in any medium—is another fiendish challenge that has tripped up legions of painters.



The artist David Salle. *Below:* *Patmos*, a pastel by Nicole Wittenberg.

Wittenberg handles both layers of difficulty with naturalness and aplomb. She made this pastel on the Greek island of Patmos last year, and you can recognize the inimitable deep blue of the water there. The drawing transmits the immediacy of an intense visual experience; we've just looked up from the beach and taken it all in, the expanse of sea cove, bounded on one side by a finger of land. Just behind this rocky ledge, a tiny strand of bright turquoise indicates the break where the cove meets the open sea. The drawing masterfully handles the transition between close-up and far away. One feels the specificity of *right here, right now*.

I love the way the drawing represents the drama of sunlight on waves in motion. The water's complex polyrhythmic undulations are translated into a latticework of colored marks. You feel the water's chop and see the reflections of light on its surface as the pastel marks become big and loose at the drawing's bottom edge. I also love the way Wittenberg has made the color of the paper itself—a bright, warm ocher—figure in the great woven scheme. The drawing has a gravitas that belies its apparent simplicity.

It hangs in the living room of my Brooklyn house, on a whitewashed brick wall, among works by other artist friends—Malcolm Morley, Amy Sillman, Carroll Dunham, Cecily Brown, Terry Winters, and the like. The luminous colors and skeins of marks are highly legible from a good 25 to 30 feet away. When I come downstairs in the morning, when that room is full of warm light, the pastel is always the first thing to catch my eye. It's lush, sensual, and austere all at once. □

# Galerie

Live *Artfully*

## SUMMER *of* ART

A LOOK INSIDE THE  
WHITNEY BIENNIAL  
INSPIRED TRAVEL:  
VENICE, ASPEN, AND MORE

SUMMER 2019  
ISSUE N°13

