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## Inside a Precious Landmark, Abstract Paintings of Diamonds



Six of Mathieu Mercier's untitled "Diamant" paintings, which will go on view May 13 at Skylight at Moynihan Station. Credit Courtesy of Denis Gardarin Gallery

The French conceptual artist Mathieu Mercier resists calling himself a painter. "I'm not inspired by having the brush in front of the canvas," he says, and most of his pieces don't compel him to even pick one up. His "Drum and Bass" series entailed placing red, yellow and blue objects on black shelves to resemble Piet Mondrian's compositions; Mercier has also constructed sculptures from stacked boxes of Glad trash bags and Aim toothpaste. "You can make masterpieces with what you have in your room," he claims. "Everything is there — it's how to make sense of it."

But Mercier can certainly maneuver a paintbrush. In May, seven of his abstract portrayals of diamonds will go on display inside the Skylight at Moynihan Station (the historic James A. Farley Post Office building and the future home of New York Fashion Week) as part of a Denis Gardarin Gallery exhibition. Each canvas, nearly five feet in diameter, occupies a separate room, some normally inaccessible to the public. For Gardarin, Mercier's paintings, to be mounted during Frieze and the spring auction season's onset, contain an explicit message about the art market. "To exhibit these works that are representations of value, at a time when the market is very much about value, puts it all out there," he says, adding, "we're bringing beautiful art to the people who want to see it."

Citing his adopted-from-René-Magritte “Ceci n’est pas une pipe” spirit, Mercier explains that “Diamants 2015” plays with multiple planes of representation. There’s the kaleidoscopic nature of the diamond itself that pulls in the surrounding colors and shapes and, though he studied a large crystal to pattern some of the paintings, he outlined others using his mind’s eye. Still, “I always joke that I have no imagination,” Mercier says. “Society is responsible for the imagination I have, it’s just that I’m looking at things and I see what’s missing in between.”

*“Mathieu Mercier: Diamants 2015” is open to the public May 13 through May 16 at Skylight at Moynihan Station, 421 Eighth Avenue, New York, [denisgardarin.com](http://denisgardarin.com).*