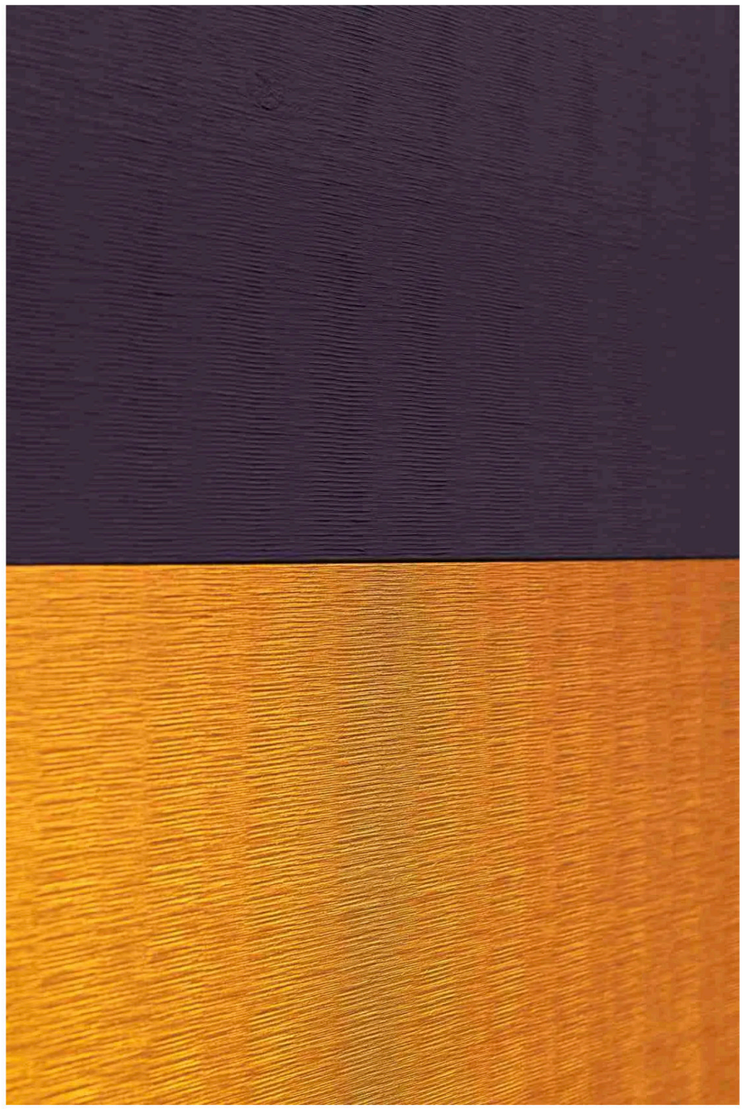
Visual Arts Reviews

Minimalist Abstract Masterpieces: Winston Roeth at Ingleby

February 10, 2026



Winston Roeth, 'Pemaquid', Kremer pigments and polyurethane dispersion on cedar panel

Born in 1945, American artist **Winston Roeth** was a student in the 1960s when he visited the Chicago Art Institute to see Ad Reinhardt's *Black Square* – '*I didn't know what it was about, but I knew it was about something.*' The matte, oil-on-linen surface, free from brushstrokes, created a glossless, textureless finish. From then on, Reinhardt became a point of reference, as well as the monochromatic palette exemplified by painters Brice Marden and Agnes Martin. While studying at the Royal College of Art, London, Roeth described an experimental process as a breakthrough in his work: '*The paintings began with the first stroke and ended when the entire surface was filled. One color... it was enough. I felt free.*'



Winston Roeth at work in his studio. Photo Tom Moore

The neoclassical interior of Edinburgh's **Ingleby Gallery** is the ideal space to present this dynamic collection of Winston Roeth's paintings, dating from 2008 to 2025.



Installation view of exhibition at Ingleby Gallery

Creatively crafted with a silky veneer, *Stones of Gold* is an impressive grid of eighteen slates, each coated with shining luminosity. The rectangular tiles are arranged with meticulous, measured spacing, their rough uneven edges contrasting with the smooth paintwork. Genre-wise, it sits comfortably within minimalism and colour-field, characterised by geometric form and materiality. As an alchemist, Roeth mixes his own pigments with a watery solution (polyurethane dispersion), applied in numerous layers across a slate or wood panel. Here, muted golds, bronzes, ochres and a singular cool green-grey move in chromatic progression, from dense flat matte to iridescent metallic sheen; the geological permanence of stone meets the ancient, sacred connotations of gold with such tactile, textured quality.

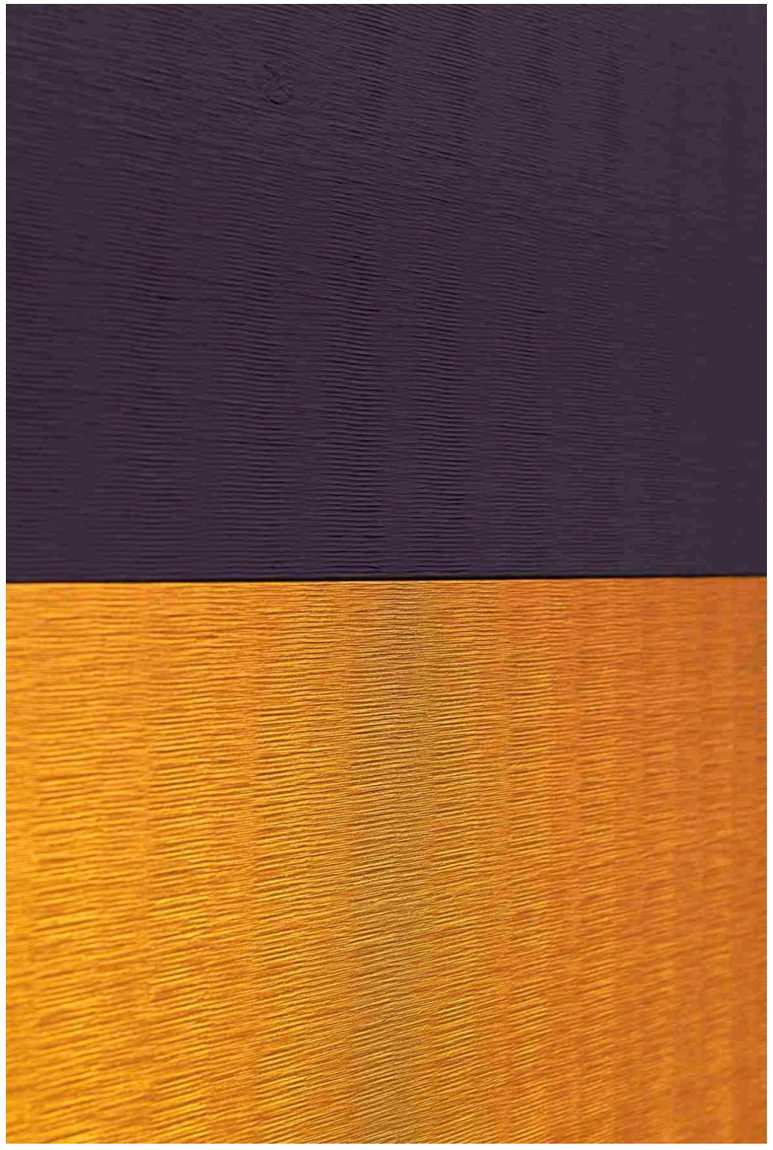


'Stones of Gold', Kremer pigments and polyurethane dispersion on 18 slates



'Stones of Gold', detail

Pemaquid is an Abenaki Native American term meaning a long finger or point, and refers to a peninsula in Maine, USA, with its iconic Pemaquid Lighthouse. True to Roeth's minimalist aesthetic, *Pemaquid* is crisply sliced into two fields, a deep indigo in contrast to the glowing cognac-amber. The meeting line is firm and unembellished, giving the work a calm, architectural clarity, emphasising balance and proportion. Fine ridges flow in waves over the surface, catching light in different ways. The dark indigo absorbs light to create distance while the amber amplifies warmth, to evoke the horizon – land, sand, sea, sky. The powerful perspective lies in its disciplined design: two colours, one division, as the modulation of texture and tone transforms abstraction into something spatially resonant.



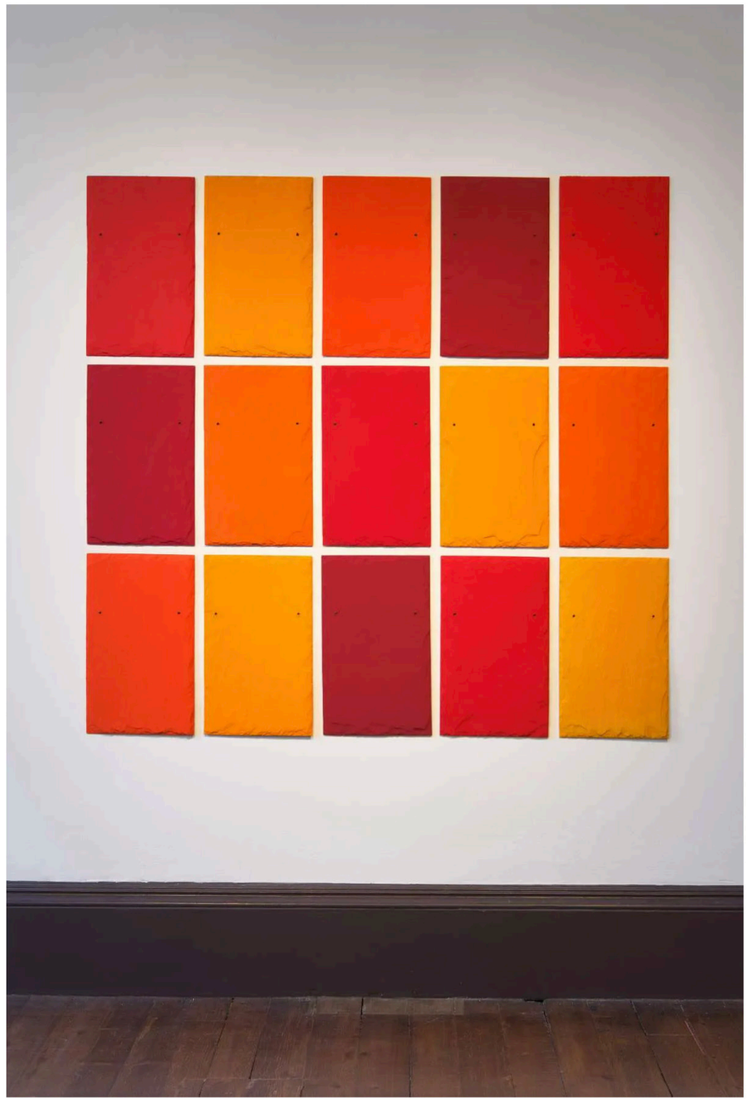
'Pemaquid', Kremer pigments and polyurethane dispersion on cedar panel

Defined and contained by a broad metallic frame, the monochromatic plane in *Twilight* appears at first glance as buttercream, yet gradually reveals a faint blush of warm grey or violet-rose. There is a subtle, radiant transparency to the thin layering of pigment, to denote perhaps fleeting moments of dusk, the dying rays of the sun. This exploration of glimmering light is not merely decorative, but emphasises its underlying sense of space and serenity: twilight, a time for quiet reflection. Akin to an artistic version of John Cage's iconic musical work, *4'33,"* Roeth has composed tonal variations of light and shade as a similar form of meditative stillness in this silent, painterly prayer.



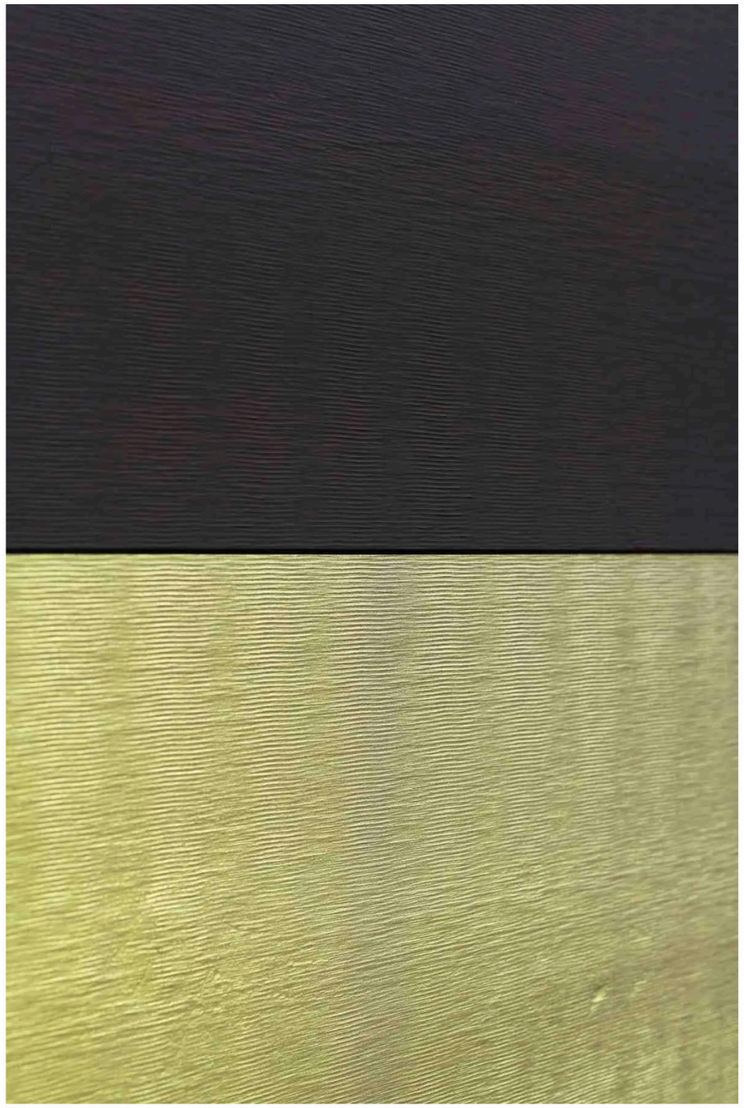
'Twilight', Kremer pigments on mounted panel

The arrangement of 15 rectangular slates across a grid of 3 x 5 rows in *Cadmium* denotes both order in its pattern as well as a rhythmic sense of movement. It's most interesting to note that Roeth often collaborates with his wife, choreographer and dancer Susan Osberg, creating set and lighting designs. Here there's a lively sense of musical flow and vitality, each tile saturated in cadmium pigments from deep crimson, bold reds to vibrant oranges and yellows with lyrical harmony. With such interplay between unity and variation, this is a cohesive composition; the spacing provides a border between each separate slate, while part of the whole structure. Reminiscent of fire and sunlight, the mood feels optimistic and invigorating with a sense of control and balance.



'Cadmium', polyurethane dispersion and cadmium pigments on 15 slates

Penobscot is a striking example of abstraction where the focus lies in its restraint, neatly divided into the contrasting dark opaque and yellow-gold fields. The solid symmetry of form is deceptive, masking the nuanced handling of paint and close relationship between colour, light and materials. A razor-sharp, horizontal division emphasises clarity and intentionality, while the colour palette is also particular and precise. Shades of gold shimmer and shift across the natural grain of the cedar wood, enhancing the surface with such perception to capture the essence of colour in painting.



'Penobscot', Kremer pigments and polyurethane dispersion on cedar panel

As Mark Rothko stated, '*A painting is not about an experience. It is an experience*'. Winston Roeth paints colour with pure pigments to orchestrate different effects of light and shade with exquisite, understated simplicity. Designed with coutured elegance, these minimalist masterpieces are indeed an immersive, visual experience.

Photographs of Winston Roeth's work at Ingleby Gallery by John McKenzie. With thanks to Viv Devlin for this review.