



## CRITIC'S PICK: GALLERIES

### “Absence Presence”

You can hardly blame Paul Vinet for the fact that any number of other recent exhibits have promoted the local gallery scene. But in the context of a spate of shows by and about collectors and art communities, Vinet's "Absence Presence" seems like the most bald-faced example of self-congratulation yet, a group portrait of several local art-world celebs striking affectedly nonchalant poses. Around these figures he's put down gold inlay. In pre-Renaissance paintings, gold was both typical and venerative; in Vinet's work, gold leaf is applied arbitrarily. The results are quite similar to Vinet's previous works, in which settings were simply whited out from photographs of people and crowds. The heavier half in Transformer's two-artist show, digital artist and musician Richard Chartier's contributions are more contemplative but less unique. His throwback ab-ex techniques include drafting and then erasing marks on a page, leaving an imprint that he then paints over. The artists work better together than apart: Vinet draws the viewer's attention to social realities, and Chartier's work benefits from that leading context. THE EXHIBITION IS ON VIEW FROM 1 P.M. TO 7 P.M. WEDNESDAY THROUGH SATURDAY, TO SATURDAY, MARCH 8, AT TRANSFORMER, 1404 P ST. NW. FREE. (202) 483-1102.

—Kriston Capps