

# The Art Out There

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Charles Ritchie



"Self-Portrait with Night XI" watercolor, graphite and conté crayon on Fabriano paper 5.5" x 12" 2011-2012



"Snow in Two Panels" watercolor, graphite and conté crayon on Fabriano paper 4" x 12" 208-2011



"Composition with Summer Foliage" watercolor and graphite on Fabriano paper 3 1/8" x 3 3/4"



"Three Windows" watercolor, graphite, conté crayon, and white ink on Fabriano paper 6 7/8 x 8 3/8" 2010-2011



Charles Ritchie's work was included in the latest issue of [New American Paintings](#) (#100 covering the Southeast U.S.) and it immediately caught my eye. I'm always drawn to night time imagery; the atmosphere of it, the way details recede into shadow and the darkness joins large areas into obscure patterns. But I also loved the way he plays with reflected images. The night he observes is often seen through a pane of glass, superimposing multiple views, further obscuring the subject matter, adding to the mystery. Then finally I noticed the technique. And especially the scale. Now I do love large paintings. Scale is incredibly important, and the impact of a particular piece can be tremendously more effective on a monumental scale. Alternately, what might have been a nice modest painting can seem a bloated and over indulgent. But small has its own strengths and charms and pitfalls. Small is intimate. A crowd can gather about a huge painting in a gallery and feel as if they are sharing in the experience. But very small pieces insist on individual interaction. Only one at a time please. You must make a very personal connection to the work. These quiet meditative images are perfectly suited for this kind of interaction. And I can well imagine that the soft, loving, labor intensive technique would well reward the smallest investment of attention. You can see much more work on the artist's website: [www.charlesritchie.com](http://www.charlesritchie.com)

<http://artoutthere.blogspot.com/2012/07/charles-ritchie.html>