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Richard Rhodes, editor of *Canadian Art Magazine* and independent curator has chosen gallery artist Christopher Willard as one of 22 Alberta artists to be included in “Timeland: 2010 Alberta Biennial of Contemporary Art.” The exhibition will take place at the Art Gallery of Alberta and run from May 29 – August 29, 2010. According to the AGA, “Timeland” creates a snapshot of the vitality of the contemporary Alberta art scene.

Christopher Willard will be creating a 16 foot high wall painting. He says, “When I was small, our town was gut-punched by a thunderstorm, the severity of which must have been astounding because my mother, a generally rational being, demanded everything be unplugged and that my brother and I sit on the middle of the staircase where we watched the visual shiver of light and shadow in the raindrops speckling our windows. This work presents my thinking about the way in which time wreaks havoc with perception and memory.”

Rhodes writes, “Christopher Willard is a painter, teacher and author who brings each of these aspects to his work. In recent years, he has made meticulous Plexiglas paintings that use grids and gray scales as entry points to the rationalist traditions of twentieth-century abstraction. Those traditions reach back to the mathematical implications of the infinite sublime and Willard has had fun rendering the vastness of it all on an intentionally small scale and further undoing any grandness with engraved phrases like “not a lot but more than enough” or “you may not know what it means, but at least it’s neat.” The results are tricky objects with an unnerved confidence that speak to the general scepticism with which abstract art continues to be met in popular culture. For the biennial, Willard reverses his strategy. He paints a large wall-size mural with an overpowering optical energy. It is a mural where he puts his expertise in colour theory to work to create grid nodes and lines that generate colour afterimages and flickering shifts in colour from top to bottom, side to side, of the mural. In the context of its busy, muscular presence he also presents a quote that becomes the work’s title about a paucity of observational records drawn from the dawning days of meteorology. In the face of the mural that contains them, the words are ironic (and maybe prescient for the exhibition at hand.) Yet they are also a reminder of the gap between experience and language, the gap between what passes as phenomena and history. “Time wreaks havoc with perception and memory,” Willard says. He might have added, so does a culture not trained in recognition.”