

After a long career as a landscape painter, this body of work explores all aspects of the subject I have alluded to my entire career: the spiritual, political, magical, and beautiful. In 2024, I see any person working with the landscape as a documentarian and political artist, for nature is ever-changing at the hands of humans. The places where we find respite and inspiration are affected by storms, overpopulation, deforestation, and other environmental, climate change issues. Since my first landscape paintings, I have always selected places directly touched by climate change and/or places with active programs to minimize human impact on the environment.

Being a West Virginia native, I learned early on the effects of man on nature with strip-mining and longwall coal mining by documenting the barren coal-mined land with dramatic colorful skies. Then as an MFA student at Boston University, I documented the transformation of Hall's Pond in Brookline, MA. Later, in Farmville, VA I created a series of paintings based on Briery Creek Lake, which is man-made and formed by damming off the creek to structure the lake. In 2016, I spent a month in Skagaströnd, Iceland, where the University of Iceland's Research Center studied the effects of tourism on the environment and ecosystems. Recently, in 2023 I spent a month at Grand Marais Art Colony, in MN, located on the northern tip of Lake Superior. My reasons for choosing the area were the rocky coast, pristine light, and the reflective sky mirrored on the lake. Additionally, I was interested in the Grand Marais Climate Action Plan, where the city is taking steps to mitigate climate change in the region.

Within this body of work, rocks are a metaphor for the fixed and rigid - the fixed, immovable problem of climate change that has been scientifically proven again and again but still isn't widely accepted by voters and lawmakers. We are moving too slowly to instigate true change as seen in places like the Great Lakes that have experienced flooding, drought, and harmful algae blooms. I believe we are too late, past the precipice, that if we immediately stopped everything that causes greenhouse gases to heat our environment the momentum of climate change would not end: the fixed and the rigid, the immovable and heavy.

I choose not to visually catastrophize the landscape, but to honor its fragility with representations of beauty, for that is what connects our human experiences. Beauty is universal, and for me, indicative of the spiritual. As long as the moon rises and sets, I will set intentions and express gratitude for the guidance it has provided not just me but many humans across spiritual paths for millennia.

Those of us given the gift of experiencing nature as the sacred, see beyond the fixed and into the void; for me, that void is pure color. Color always guides my hand and mind as I move through a painting. I work in contrasting colors, capturing the extreme light of nightfall and sunrises but placing them in unexpected ways: the color of the sky will show up on a rocky surface and vice versa. Using color to abstract the precise visual and reinventing verisimilitude in a surprising way abates visual exactitude. My goal is to transport the viewer to a magical landscape, allowing them to appreciate its beauty and experience all of its visual and meaningful layers in a single painted moment.

