

Circumventing Control

By

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Abstract

My creative process emerges from the struggle between two contrasting impulses: a habitual desire to control my internal and external environments, and an instinctive need to overcome these constraints. The discoveries I have made in the studio have fostered my desire to confront anxiety and make critical decisions in the face of uncertain outcomes. For me, the process of making has become a mode of thinking. It has become a way of remembering the past, envisioning the future, and experiencing the present moment. I find that working with collage in combined analog and digital formats, allows me to experiment with images and materials in an immediate way. As a result, my studio practice has provided a way for me to circumvent the controlling mind, and to re-examine some of the old, outdated paradigms I have about life and art.

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My creative process emerges from the struggle between two contrasting impulses: a habitual desire to control my internal and external environments, and an instinctive need to overcome these constraints. The dilemma I face, both in life and in art, is how to find an appropriate balance between these two forces. My art studio practice provides a means to harness these aspects of my personality. As with most children, I was taught from early childhood to control or repress impulsive behavior. Fortunately, this training helped keep me alive. However, it played a negative role as well, manifesting itself in a fear of the unknown. It put me out of touch with my innate ability to adapt and improvise in precarious situations. Instead, I developed intolerance towards ambiguity. Growing up, I became preoccupied with safety and financial security. The result was an adulthood defined by limited vision and unsatisfying occupations.

Motivated by a desire to lead a more self-actualized life, I began to challenge my existing paradigms and redirect my interests toward more creative enterprises. My entry into art-making was the beginning of a different self-realization. I've learned that whenever I am able to move forward without hesitation, to trust my intuition, the process of making flows easier, the work resonates on a more personal level, and garners attention as an 'energized' object. Developments in my studio practice have coincided with a growing understanding of Wabi-Sabi, the Japanese aesthetic worldview of perfection through imperfection. This has bolstered my growing ability to confront anxiety and make prompt decisions in the face of uncertain outcomes, both in and out of the studio.

I feel successful in the studio when I am able to navigate through the noisy chatter of my mind and focus on new avenues of thought. For me, the process of making has become a mode of thinking. It has become a way of remembering the past, envisioning the future, and experiencing the present moment. Projects will often be initiated and propelled by an image, color, or a physical material that particularly resonates with me. The impetus will sometimes revolve around a recognizable token of the past, such as a family snapshot, a vintage advertisement, or an old kitschy house decoration. As the process and materials interweave, new ways of looking at old information come to the fore, and the content of my work emerges. This content, thus far, has been a confluence of multiple personal issues relating to life transitions, aberrations in my eyesight, and an obsession with time. These issues manifest visually in a combination of fragmented imagery, activated color, and a tension between divergent and convergent forms.



Marathon – Detail

I find that working with collage in combined analog and digital formats, allows me to experiment with images and materials in a spontaneous way. This immediacy has become crucial in my quest to circumvent the controlling mind. Utilizing and integrating several software programs, I apply various filters and blending tools to digital images, which foster ‘happy accidents.’ It takes a certain amount of control out of my hands and promotes an appropriate amount of unpredictability. I find that the element of chance in the digital realm often mimics the way I recall memories. Unlike memories, however, the image is frozen in time. Thus, I am able to initiate a dialogue with the work and re-evaluate the distant past. This allows me to examine how my mind actually recreates the past in the context of who I am today.

As with the digital work, the physical aspect of my studio practice seeks the same level of immediacy. I print the digital collages, photographs and other images on paper and transfer them to wood panels with acrylic gel medium. In addition to these transfers, I include notes, sketches, and doodles. I also employ colored paper, dyed fabric remnants, and acrylic paint left over from previous projects. I adhere these studio mementos into multiple layers of visual information. Once this process begins, the impulse to delineate structure creates a meditative state. I hand-chisel through the layers, excavating material to reveal the colors and images below. Outlining certain areas, I begin to organize the revealed strata and create a record of where my hand has been. Operating in a manner where process informs and directs the content of the object, I continually add and remove information until a personal sense of organization begins to appear, creating order out of what initially is random. This multi-layered approach creates a dilated instant that contains different fragments of time within the spatial confines of a single pictorial frame. The detail of *Dora* demonstrates how this activity allows me to capture multiple moments

in time, to fold the past and the present together into what Zen Buddhism refers to as an ‘everlasting now.’



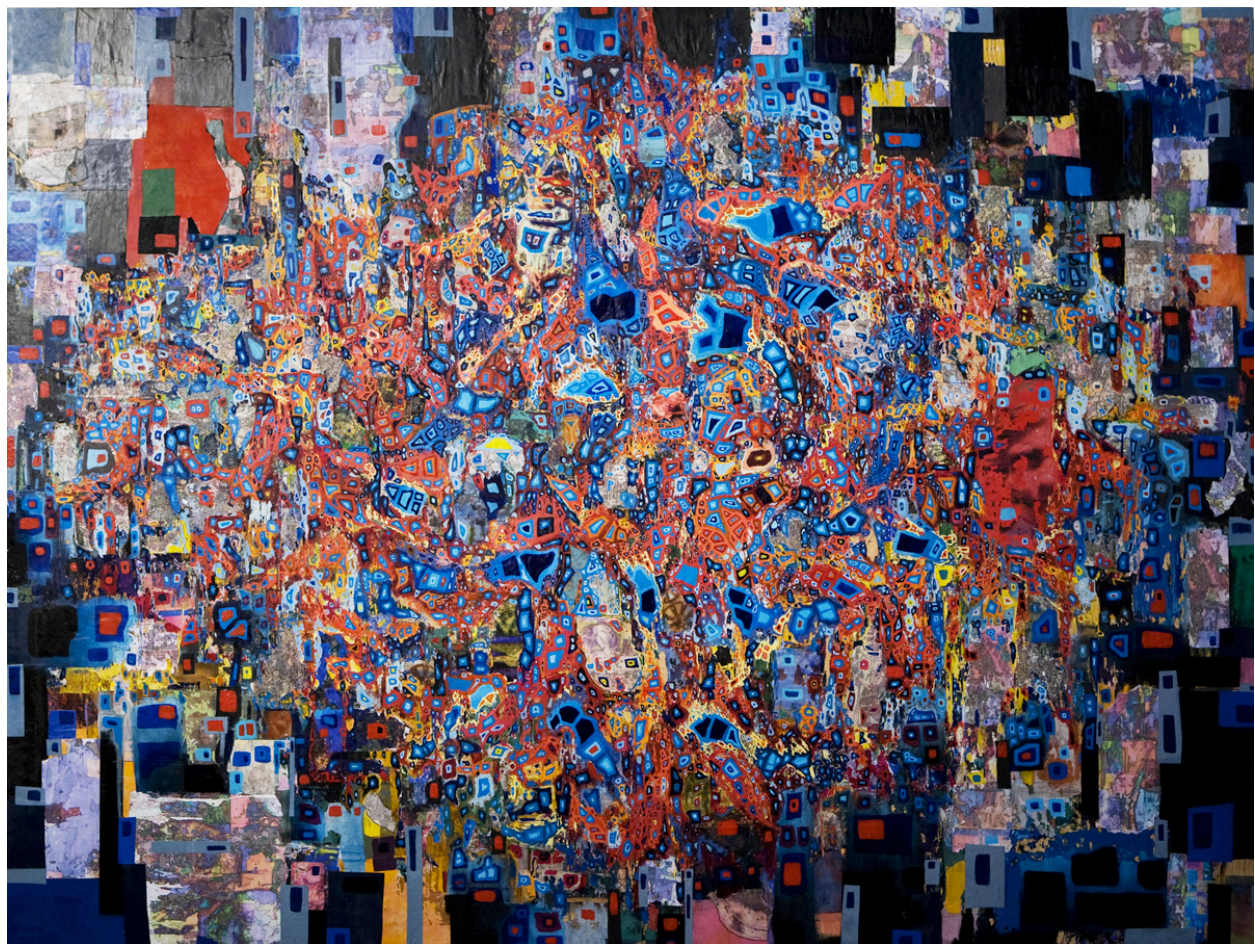
Dora – Detail

Combining and repeating various digital and physical techniques, my studio practice has become a method of mapping. It has become a way to navigate and explore the gap between what I am physically seeing and hearing, and that which my mind has already presupposed through personal experience. This process has provided an avenue for me to analyze, question, and confront some of my old worldviews, especially the ones that have limited the way I think about life and art.

Circumventing Control: Images



Installation View



Marathon

2011, Mixed media on Panel, 6' by 8'



Dora

2011, Mixed Media on Panel, 5' by 5'



Montana Milieu

2010, Mixed Media on Panel, 6' by 6'



Quagmire

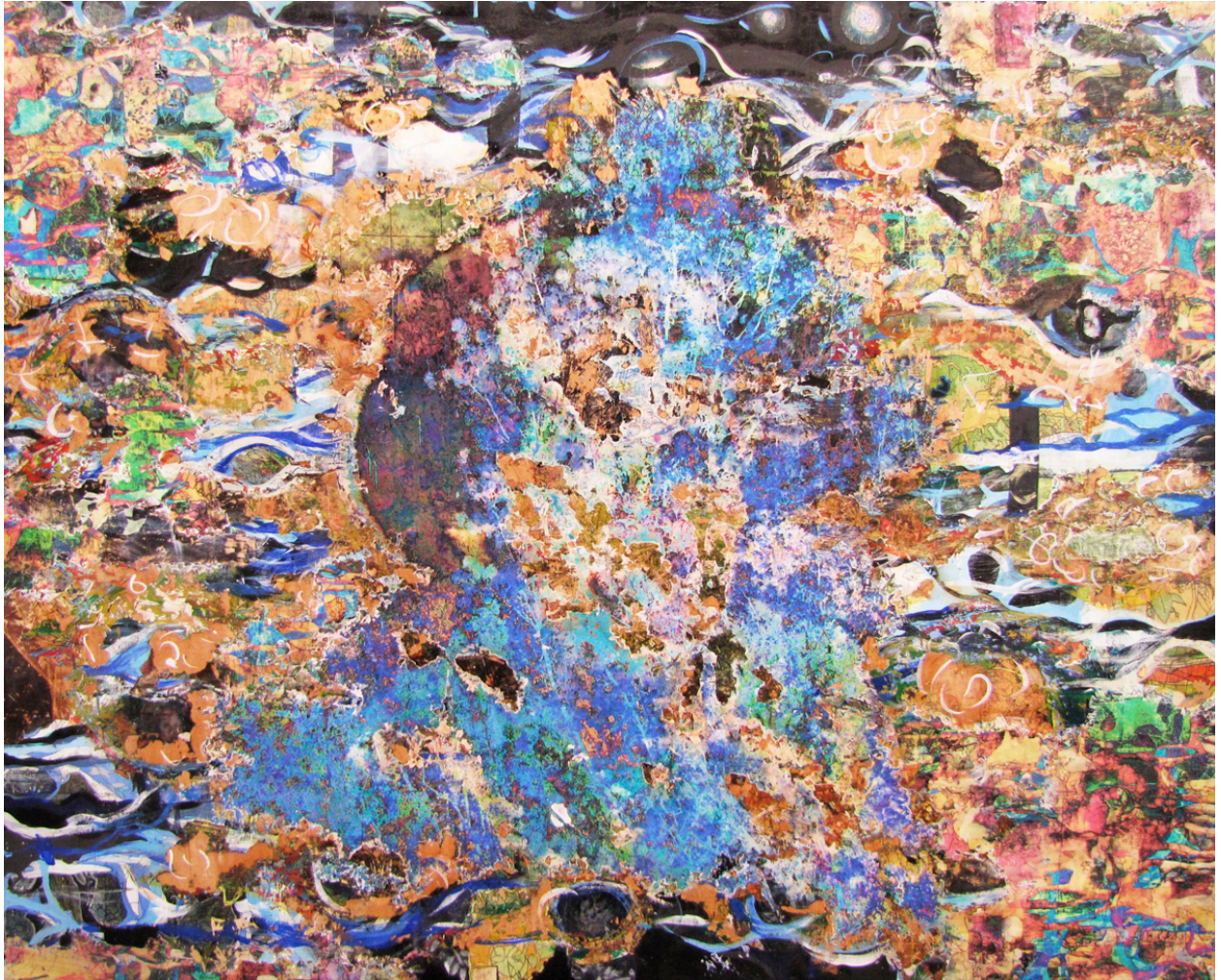
2011, Mixed Media on Panel, 5' by 5'



Layered Ideologies

2011, Mixed Media on Panel, 42" by 42"

Images shown in hallway display case:



Silhouette of '72

2010, Mixed Media on Panel, 40" by 50"



Speedy Tedium

2010, Mixed Media on Panel, 40" by 50"