

Ominous, Atmosphere, and Wheaton, MN

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While planning to create a new piece of art, I find a place or a situation that evokes a response. Most of my research is done in the field looking for the landscape that grabs that response. When the particular place is located, I record information through observations, sketches, photographs, and notes.

I then compile these reference materials into an idea and plan out the formal issues. I have found that small quick drawings and paintings help me find pleasing compositions, form, and color. Within these studies, I work quickly and in a painterly style. The main purpose is to give me a starting point and visual for the finished piece. The process for a finished painting begins with a panel or canvas that has been primed and sanded into a smooth surface. I sketch as much information as possible in pencil, and then I give the surface a layer of matte medium. The matte medium seals the gesso and pencil, and makes the oil paint flow like mayonnaise or butter.

In my latest body of work, I worked with the elements of sky and land and their relationship to each other. The slides illuminate the relationship between the sky and the land. I chose vertical formation order to discuss landscape painting in a less stereotypical fashion. Vertical format focuses mainly on things that are directly overhead and in front of the viewer, giving no peripheral vision. Placing a sliver of land along the bottom of the pieces allows me to demonstrate an anchoring device as well as where the colors originate in the sky. Along the series of five vertical paintings are two interconnected square paintings. The two smaller square paintings demonstrate a closer look at gradation in a cloud and how it happens. The paintings were painted by hand showing gradation effects and two others using a process done with a mechanical device. This is a process I had come across in printmaking class that I wanted to interconnect with painting.

My ideas are composed through the love of the landscape that inhabits the upper Midwest. I am an avid outdoorsman and enjoy the seemingly untouched areas that still remain. I am attracted to the land because it offers a never-ending array of information that is valuable to an artist like me. What is valuable about my connection with the outdoors is the fact that it is greater than me; my ideas stem from lighting, weather, atmosphere, mood, seasonal interests, and studying other artists' work.

Several painters have had a major influence on me and my work as an artist. I am influenced by the following painters: Theresa Handy and Joseph Paquet (both from St. Paul, MN) and Jay Moore and Clyde Aspevig (both from the southwest). Theresa Handy's work is more minimal compared to Jay Moore, and Clyde Aspevig takes more of a plein air approach (paintings produced in the natural light outdoors). These four artists have created their own distinct styles; they have approached their work by painting landscapes using their own voice.

Learning from school, my own personal growth, and observing and studying other artists, I am growing in such a way that I am finding my own language and establishing my own parameter through the tradition of landscape painting.