

ALLEN MOE

Allen Moe, master pot maker, has incorporated animals skins and other life remnants into his work. He has cast concrete on river beds, desert floors, and dying trees. He has made art out of his intimate knowledge of the planet's surfaces and inhabitants.

Two years ago Moe turned to oil paints to find a new expression for his on-going exploration of the natural world, its forces and patterns. He sequestered himself away for months in his remote Sierra Nevada cabin in the Winter of 2016-2017, and again in the Winter of 2017-2018. During this isolated period he painted in oils on small boards. He used a dropper instead of a brush, the paints unmixed except for a medium. He worked with intention in a basic grid or drop pattern with careful choice of pigment. However, there were developments beyond the artist's control.

The making of an artist's work at times tips into allowing the elements of time, weather, gravity or happy accidents to take the upper hand. Moe has always worked in nature with nature. Here the partnership continues. The resulting work is brilliant in its color and dynamic in the drift of edges and shapes. Measuring 10 x 10 inches or smaller, the paintings are jewel like, both ancient and new.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

"These paintings are created through a process much like marbling, in which droplets of oil paint diluted to the consistency of motor oil are dropped onto a wet surface where they spread out without mixing, retaining their identity through surface tension. When applied one after another on top of each other, each one pushes the color of the former to the edge like the building up of a shoreline. Eventually after many drops these margins themselves begin to float, and entirely unexpected patterns begin to emerge out of the chaos. Sometimes these are specific, like flowers or waves, and sometimes less so, like mud cracks or landforms seen from miles above.

The variables are huge - the exact consistency of the medium and the properties inherent to the oil paint itself all contribute to the spreading patterns, so that the painting becomes extremely complex and it is out of this complexity that unexpected levels of order emerge.

Once the bits start floating they carry their formative information with them - the specific sequence of colors like sedimentary layers in rock - and the painting becomes something like plate tectonics, where these bits merge and interact with one another while still carrying the distinct history of their original formation. It is thrilling to witness and challenging to exercise the control it takes to make one of these paintings.

The paintings are small but like a wildflower or a beetle they reveal an astonishing precision when examined closely.

The whole point in all my work - pots, castings and now paintings - is to encourage us to look closely at the world around us and marvel at the details in the expression of the forces that create the universe of which we are a part."

From chaos theory : a Boolean network is a model that is intended to help develop an understanding of how a complex system with random parameters can exhibit regular behavior, a phenomenon called emergence.