

Plein Air Landscapes and Abstracted Landscapes

Plein air painting (painting from observation in the landscape) is an approach to painting that was established by the French Barbizon School painters in the 1830's. I have been making small, quick observational paintings in this way since 1997. These images are then transformed in the studio into larger works that utilize a varied grammar of painting to explore states of perceptual and psychological dissonance.

Bunkers

The *Bunkers* came out of visits my wife Zoe and I made to Pointe Du Hoc, Normandy in 2009. Pointe Du Hoc is where there are untouched remains of German bunkers that were extensively shelled by the Allied ships in the invasion of Normandy. I found the ruins to be such a compelling fusion of those things that interest me in landscape-- one thing that appears to be many other things simultaneously and is psychologically and emotionally charged. These polymorphic ruins are situated in a seemingly lunar landscape of craters with diameters of over twenty feet dotting the whole area where shells from the U.S. ships struck. I am fascinated by how the remaining structures look as if they were from the future or the past-- anything but 1943 when they were actually built. I am interested in the impulse to guard a vast coastline within basically a medieval structure against ships that could shell them up to twenty miles away and the futility that represents.

Islands

In the Island images, a series I have worked in since 2003, I have consistently upended perceptual anchors such as curving or tilting the horizon line, having something in deep space overlap something in the foreground--leading to huge spatial/scale shifts and inverting rules of atmospheric perspective when it comes to color and sharpness. I want these shifts and the dissonance they create to almost happen imperceptibly and for this I use the cinematic dissolve as my inspiration and visual tactic--one thing seamlessly blending into another so that you are seeing/believing one thing and then gradually another. Part of complicating the experience of the images is also in the polymorphic form of the Islands themselves which have human, animal, vegetable, and mechanical attributes and can hold these different categories simultaneously so that the paintings can be both figurative and landscape, fusions and icons.

