

Abstracted Landscapes and Plein Air Landscapes

For the past ten years, my approach in this series is to create psychological images utilizing the genre of landscape painting. I want to complicate the visual experience by supporting some pictorial conventions while undermining others, by having multiple visual languages concurrent within one image and by having areas of the painting in direct contradiction or conflict with each other. I'm interested in exploring the psychological space of holding simultaneously and contradictory beliefs or perceptions.

In the *Abstracted Landscape* series I use a plein air approach to find certain spatial relationships and then disrupt those relationships by using local color in a non-descriptive way to contradict the linear perspective of the drawing. Instead of looping back into realism, I have found that using known spaces and colors in a counterintuitive way creates a heightened psychological tension between what we expect and believe visually and what we experience.

This increased visual and mental tension I think comes from the echoes of the recognizable and how these cues encourage a greater subliminal belief in the landscape thus making the distortions more intimate.

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.

Suns

With the Sun drawings I am interested in representing the most basic and iconic of forms. I am also thinking about cliches and whether or not a sun can be represented visually in an original way. I want to see what happens if instead of running away from an aesthetic cliché one runs toward it. Several artists that I love, like Sergio Leone, do this and come out the other side with something original. Beyond his example, stylistically I am thinking of the comic book artist Jack Kirby, the modernists Oscar Bluemner and Charles Burchfield, and Aztec and Mayan sculpture.

