



NEIL ENGGIST
20 PAINTINGS + STORIES

20 PAINTINGS – NEIL ENGGIST 23

In my practice, the line between artistic intention and the creative functioning of wilderness is blurred, or more accurately, these spheres merge into a unified moment. Nature is welcomed into the congregation of creation. Paintings are collaborations with wider circles of consciousness to form a stillness of clarified wonder and transformation. My hand becomes one crucial, individuated, yet non elevated member of the assembly, which must spontaneously concur and imagine with wild systems to create a place of belonging and beauty.

The nature of water, marks of evaporation, melting, freezing, burning, gravity, animal tracks, traces of dance, time, storms, tides, and all manner of seasonal and emotional weather combine to transform the canvas into a terrain in flux. Each action is composed within an ecological system, in a kind of Taoist exercise, merging with the changes, not holding onto but allowing and listening to what the painting reaches out to become, finding full expression by its own wild virtue.

I have followed great performances of color into the mountains, canyons, coastlines, and rivers for nearly 20 years, traveling across the US, Europe, China and India, painting, photographing, and writing my experiences into sensorial weavings. As a traveler, painting becomes the act of experiencing a place--the painting becomes the material of experience. Traveling serves to connect the painter with the uncalculated, forcing a spontaneity and a body-memory response. I aim to paint as one would go down a waterfall and dance and play jazz at once. Materials from places of intuitive spiritual significance--white gypsum sand from New Mexico, pigment from the Holi festival of India, black sand from Kanyakumari, gravel from Highway 61, Arizona red sand, water from the Salish Sea, Mississippi River, Glastonbury, and the Atlantic layer the topography of the painting as stories and textures are woven together.

I hope my work brings viewers toward their own idea of infinity, wildness, and self-realization. Art is a form of transport from material to inner light, moving one with wonder toward their own great forests, mysteries, and spaces of illumination. How can my work offer a story that would make one want to live and care in deep and earnest ways about the twined fates of nature and humanity? I make Art as a possibility to create a new Earth mythology, one that welcomes nature, lives with spirit, and celebrates all forms of Love.

MISSISSIPPI VIOLET FIRE



acrylic, ink, dye, holi pigment, Mississippi River dirt, Ligurian sea stones, 62x51 in. 2021

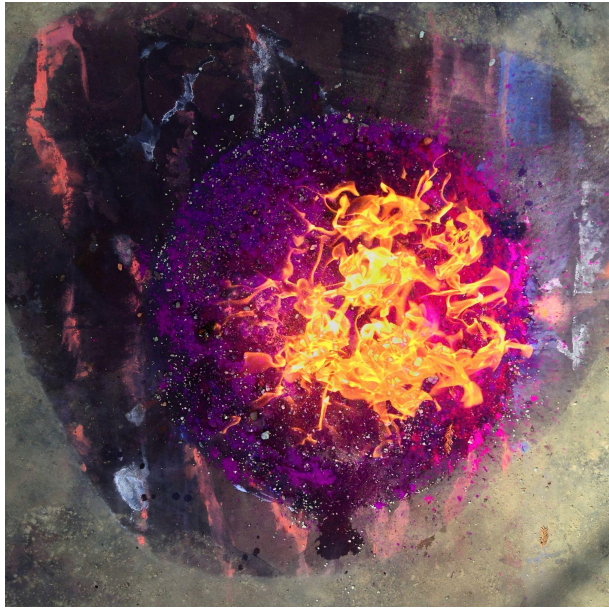
This painting started on the western banks of the Mississippi River in Montrose, Iowa in the fall of 2019. I was driving from the source of the Mississippi River in Minnesota down to St. Louis down the slow river roads, drawing the River with river water and india ink, camping and sleeping in my car. This was my final morning on the River. The night before was wild- I made some biker friends and caught a glimpse of an American beauty that felt quite absent and cathartic in such divided, hostile times. I stared into the silver grey river, it was wider than I'd ever seen it. 3 days ago, I had walked over the River's beginning in 16 steps. The painting was quiet, just eyes moving with the water, and the brush moving with eyes. My mind however was not quite right, climbing out of the river, onto the road, mythical Highway 61. I had to drive to Nashville today and my heart was buried by a thin layer of mud as the river rushed by. My thoughts gave way to the music that pulled me out here, Son House, Dylan, Bruce, Louis, Buddy, Jimi, Jazz, Blues, Country, Rock and Roll, the classless, spiritual freedom loving sound that ran up the River and rang out into the world.

I brought it out a year later in NJ, after a rough day of plunderous self work. Love, forgiveness, violet magenta light, green sea stones from a small beach in Italy, spring storms, little tea roses- every thought that was causing me pain and the systems creating these thoughts- all of it I put into the circle, covered with holi pink (pink of the madness of love) and a hot purple. The dry blue dahlia that Ziggy (my future wife) had given me back in SF had lost most of its petals, and it was calling now to burn. I had to be careful to not strike the match too soon, for too soon and everything would burn, out of control. Lighting the Dahlia on fire was an act of self forgiveness, transforming our wounds into power, empathy and healing smoke, and soon the star was burning purple, shining with resurrected Love. Purple stars are the hottest and hardest stars to find since our eyes see so much more blue, or they burn so hot into ultraviolet light, the purple behind the darkness.

What was overwhelming yesterday - ash in the river.

What was overwhelming yesterday - burning into life anew.

Love burns, Love lives on.



KEY WEST / IMMORTALITY



acrylic, ink, charcoal, and organic material on steel, 48x86 in. 2016-23

I tried the impossible, to paint the song.

The painting began in 2016 either in the San Francisco Bay or in my Dogpatch studio using Pacific ocean water and SF mist as the agent transformation. It is on 8 foot 22 gauge cold rolled steel, pretty heavy, yeh buddy.

The Dylan song 'Key West' is an invocation of the divine sound made manifest, a story of the intoxication of Love and beauty, a place of healing, escape and the 'bleeding heart disease.' Dylan's 'gumbo limbo spiritual' takes us through the Paradise smoke of the last American resort, floating like a mirage just beyond the horizon. It invokes a land beyond time that one can touch through music and slippery history. In this archipelago of forgetting, the eternal presence can slip through the veil of the song, right through that accordion moan. The places the artist may go promise they will return with the quantum radiance to circle

the solar body enlight. But when you go to this Key West, this inner island, there is no going back, no returning. The artist forgets everything but the rituals of Love. In this act of song creation, the alchemist artist aligns his energy body with the Celestial Soul, a chance to burn with etheric fire into bliss consciousness / Immortality.

I painted Key West, along with storms of the summer, fall and winter, for years. Tree sculptures 'Asuras' painted with true indigo ink would move around the steel surface like an opera, and the rains would mark their tracks with oxidation. There appeared characters and presences - the Asuras, the old Tiger, the singer who becomes the song, The Owl, carrying souls between worlds, dreams from the center redwood trees, a golden dove, the Great River, a small road to the Lost Coast, a Giacometti figure, walking into the wind.

Time moves a very different way through this painting - it moves tidally inward and outward from the heart center, and from within each particle of form and space, expanding through the solar body, creating itself over and over.

Part of the American Story involves the imagining of an unspoiled paradise that awaits the sinner on the 'frontier.' Here the paradise has already turned inside out, been mined and rewilded, apocalypse and beauty walking hand and hand. The surreal conjunction of the dream and the highway, Key West, a seaside between worlds where Love is the possibility of connection between every life form, where every broken spirit can create their Home on the Horizon Line.

There was an action that caused everything to change at once, a birth of the New Earth through a single movement of multiple color. A rainbow appeared on my ceiling in the morning, the sun reflecting on my BeLoved's book of starseed. I put the colors on the Pedernal, a steel painting based on my BeLoved's drawing of the Holy Mountain in New Mexico. I ran the steels together, in an experience of each chakra being combed through with the color of the new earth in one line of intensities. The song was now known well, the body a dragon of realizing color, Self realizing.

If you lost your mind, you'll find it there



I HEAR MY TRAIN



acrylic, ink, Mississippi River mud, Yellowknife sand, leaves and oil on canvas, 62 x 54 in 2019

'I Hear my Train' began in the summer of 2019, after rewatching Jimi Hendrix's live performance of the blues song, 'I Hear my Train a Comin.' I remember first seeing this performance in my father's basement in high school, feeling the rapture of this Astral Cherokee Blues, entralling me to somehow reach for this level of pure expression like lightning. 18 years later, seeing it again, I became realigned with my youthful artistic purpose, to convey the searing joy and oceanic pain of being alive, stone free, with every particle of being devoted to exactly this performance of art.

When a painting is on fire, decisions are made from emergency--true and from the body. The fire unites the materials and all the colors burn together and become warmer and darker. The fire does more to the artist than to the art - there is no time to think, your body instinctively performs the color. As in Jimi's Monterey performance, the fire also enacts a sacrifice, the creation of a higher order demands the honor of destruction.

My studio in Princeton is right by the train station and when I heard the cry of the train, I knew I couldn't complete this work without making a journey, down an old road, I had to feel something that was no longer here. So I started driving out of Jersey, through the everlasting Pennsylvania Turnpike, Ohio, UP into Michigan, and found the source of the Mississippi River in Minnesota, as well as Bob Dylan's Echo blue childhood house. I followed the river down the slow river roads, Highway 61, the mythical delta road that shadows the bloodstream of America, down to St. Louis, meeting some friendly, hard living folks along the way. I let the road unearth my reason to be, lost in this winding flash of American twilight, my somber pursuit of happiness, camping and sleeping in my car. Being on the road was my spiritual practice, I still believed. Each day I woke and drew the River with river water and india ink.

I came back to NJ broke with a gallon of River mud. With this mud mixed with a Pacific Blue, I added an essential layer to the train light and cosmic material of the painting. It was the River, the mudbound soul of America, howling like the ghost riders, you can hear it coming.



TYGERLIGHT



acrylic, dye, ink, spray paint, turmeric and oxidation on steel, 48x63 in 2022

Tygerlight started during a residency with Lucid Art Foundation in Point Reyes 2018, using Pacific Ocean water to create the first version called 'Lisbon.' It was revisited back in New Jersey influenced by a Nabakov story about an aquamarine bowl. Then turmeric was applied in joyful anticipation of the Haldi ceremony of my upcoming wedding. Haldi is the protection and purification ritual that precedes the main event in Pakistani / Indian weddings. Finally I painted Mt. Heaven on a silk upon the central orb, a mountain I drew in Montana on the Road to the Sun in 2021. The mountain is where heaven and earth exist together for a moment in the right light. Also influential was a Daoist full moon meditation, involving the perfecting of light.

There is life in the dying, joy in each mourning for joy,
in the labyrinth of leaving we visit the Goddess
One day we awaken, moved to sing
nearer to the sky, inside the inside sky
crying enlit, our cumbersome ideas
of enlightenment have disappeared
without trace, there's some dance
in our whisper whirling in tighter dimensions spiraled together
shapes of our burning presences
raven shadows across the dead branches
disappearing darkness and the bear of
fire opal in lowland golden hour
cooling to indigo, the mind when
reflecting the heart's first light,
feeling the tube of existence
darkly rolled around you and then
through the opening, just up there
(the tyger) (the light perfected)

From Tygerlight 2022

GOLDEN LIGHT MUDRA



acrylic, Big Sur sand, White Sands, turmeric, and oxidation on canvas 62x50 in 2022

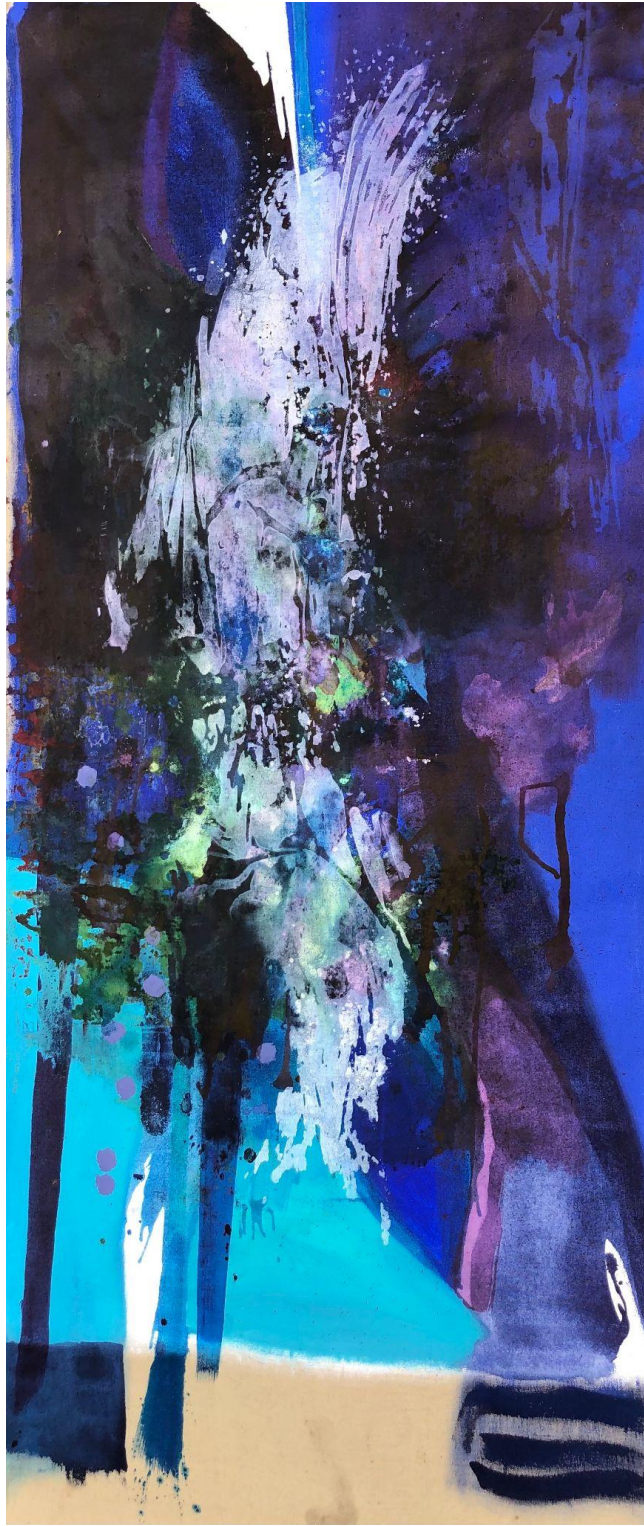
The Golden Light Mudra started as a dance in Big Sur, California in 2016. I don't recall the dance as it was a pure release of mind into body, following my MFA completion, during the brief and happy spell of living in my minivan in and around San Francisco. As I danced on the canvas on the beach at twilight, I reached for all the blues I had, only blue, all blue, and the purple-ish sand of Big Sur. For six years the painting remained in the blue darkness. In 2022, I decided to revisit the canvas with a renewed vision.

The shape The imperfect circle, cosmic egg, the round river stone - the shape did not occur to me, I did not find or dream it - it was always there, within me and beheld.

My father made a stained glass before I was born, based on the painting Joan Miro made for the Chateau Mouton Rothschild 1969 wine label. This was the year both of my parents arrived in America, from Switzerland and Taiwan. The glass hung in our study facing the south. I was always drawn to the round form of exuberant sun bearing red that seemed to hold Miro's flying stars, ships and creatures in orbit. I never asked him or myself, what it was, holding it all together, but just accepted it, as a child accepts the eyes of his mother and father, as something elemental and whole.

I made this shape with Turmeric, a material of matrimonial significance and a color that pulses with a grace, hope, and joy that is almost the opposite (and complement) of my own blue soul, or perhaps it is the very color of my soul which longs for its other. The canvas was exposed to a storm and then a piece of steel was laid atop to co-oxidize and bloom. The result coincided with a Qi Gong exercise called the Shamanic Cosmic Orbit where a space is created to behold one's pure inner light. This space is silently contained within the Golden Light Mudra.

BLUE WHALE



acrylic ink pacific sand and stones on canvas, 108x43 in 2018

I painted the Blue Whale during a residency at Lucid Art Foundation in Point Reyes, CA 2018. The director said I could stay one extra day. I had seen Ziggy at Vesuvio, my world had cracked and I had to let it break.

I was thinking about Cetacean consciousness.

There was a book there - 'Mind in the Waters' from the 70s, studying and imagining the sensorium of whales and dolphins, how they experience the dream of life, in sonic maps of dimensions unsensed by humans.

On the last day, I took a deep breath and dove into the deep blue violet black waters and found the Blue Whale swimming in the deepest blue, being blue, blue was where we, the whale and I were exactly the same - our sensorial confluence - Blue.

*I danced on the sari, thin frail divine light
I painted my feet in ocean water and pearl white
And danced into a silent warrior
Held in monumental beautiful sadness.
All at once I held the Blue Whale / song
And let it go, Let it Be.*

I wanted to say - We are fighting for you, We are here
to fight together with you for all our wilderness within and without, for our freedom to be wild.

The Blue Whale is not about capturing but freeing your divinity, listening to and performing the epic poem that is one expression of Love.

We are fighting/dancing/
in divine confluence with you, Sisters and Brothers
I wanted to say
But now I was alone, broken, broke, and all I could do was drive, drive away.
Paradise smoke was drifting in I was on the dream highway
driving back to NJ with Joey Brask into cold cold Zion, through Nebraska, and the tunnels of PA,
then on to Portugal, Shanghai, SF, Venice, Barcelona, Switzerland twice, and then, after a few months adrift
in NJ, I was gonna come back to town and straight up sweep Z off her feet..

I didn't know it, but that was the plan.

ZERMATT II





acrylic, ink, earth, pigment and New Mexico white sand on canvas, 52x41 in 2023

Years of traveling and painting, compelled to walk amongst many mountains, I have noticed the things that have shaped the peak have shaped me. Walking among certain mountains, I begin to remember where I came from, why I am here, what I can still do. Thoughts, breaths, emotions and visions become purified and unified into a great vision and coming down the mountain, I am never the same.

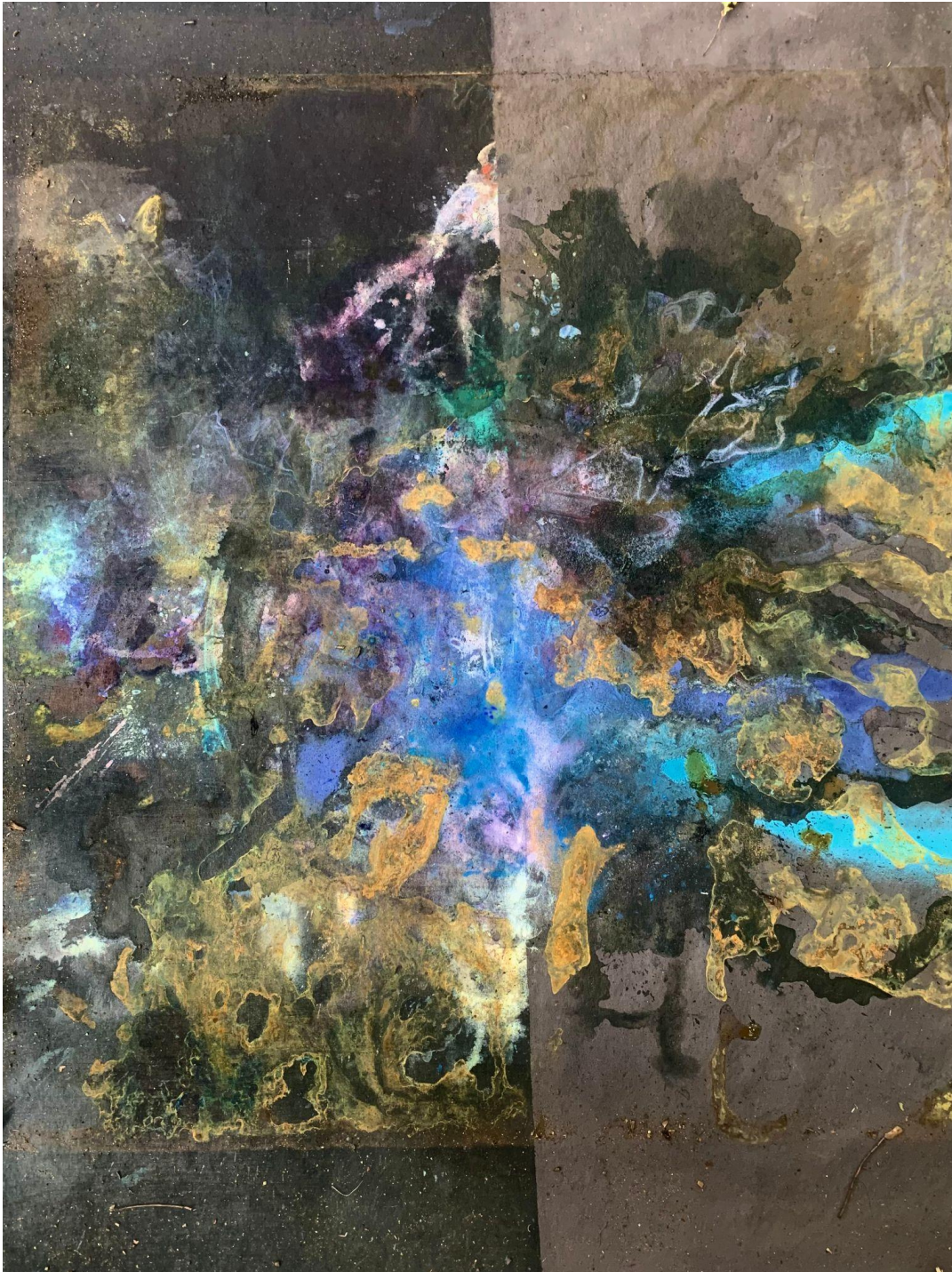
This piece was worked on after the profound experience of walking and painting in Zermatt. There is a small film of this process on my website. I wrote a long, dense, neutron starlike poem from the thrall of the Matterhorn, this is an excerpt-

As I stepped on the canvas I knew I couldn't paint the mountain

I had to make the shape of the mountain's occurrence with my body, to understand with my feet the brief million years of the mountain, a glaciation lifting quickly

as the Chinese painter traces unseen deer paths
through the grasses and up the tendons
of the mountain's hands praised and between
I could see the ways we could climb
this, this earth, this threshold
This question of earth, pulling apart
The cosmic principle divided imparted with longing
learning Love singing recomposing into the breathing mountain
Kingly feminine and Queen man
A world traversable to meet
ascendable by walking toward
the enlightening of all

THE IMMORTAL JELLYFISH



acrylic, ink, dye, spray paint, pigment and oxidation on canvas, 61x48 in 2022

When one version of this painting was finished, I sat with it for about a year, then decided it needed work. I painted out an entire half of the original and began the revisitation with storms, whips of ink and dye, fire, swordplay, oxidation, and blue and green pigment from Venice. I needed to paint away half of the world in order to re-enter it with near complete freedom.

Around this time my wife was stung by a jellyfish in Cape May, NJ. Though painful, we both felt it was a magical visitation and we accepted a dose of jellyfish medicine which impels you to let go, exit google maps, attune to the entire ocean, and let the universe move you. There is a jellyfish that has the ability to revert back to its polyp form when in distress, then re-emerge anew, theoretically able to live forever.

This painting also helped me formulate the cosmological theory of the Blue Hole, as a creative alternative to the Black Hole-

The Blue Hole
Accepts everything in a
brightening sadness
A coolness of Miles-like heat
holding everything within
and letting everything go
like a storm on the ocean
Water flying into water
and when you're ready to join
The Whole / the embrace
of your BeLoved / Self
You become the Blue and
Everything saturated with
useless weight drops
into the infinite sky and you
can walk on unencumbered
Everything can move into you
and everything can move out
of you like a silk azure between
the inescapable Deep Violet Heart and the
Birth of New light

WHITE TIGER



acrylic, ink, glass, sand, tea roses, silk, and oil on canvas, 48x48 in. 2011

In 2011, Ziggy returned from Shanghai, stopping over in NJ, where I was painting in the spirit of the revolutions that were roiling the globe. She smuggled back a dragon head painted ecstatic colors and gave it to me. I hadn't known yet about the Taoist alchemical relation between the Yang Dragon and the Yin Tiger, or the mystical animals of the East (Blue/Green Dragon) and West (White Tiger). In my mythology Z was the White Tiger. After she left, I painted the color swooning aftermath of the White Tiger's ferocious, blazing presence.

Painting in the White Tiger style, is really an anything goes / sudden revolution approach. Paintings are ripped in half, silk printed, spilled on, rained on, washed out, snowed in, burned up, flipped around, turned upside down, sword slashed, cut out, poured over with glass and sea stones, thrown into the sea, lost, retrieved, broken apart and painted back together. Done with utmost patience and precision of action as a tiger tracking and attacking a deer of pure beauty. Colors burst together in unlawful ways, finding new polarities sometimes in annihilation.

'Each life is its own death, and she who kills you is somehow a messenger of the destiny that was yours from the start.'

-Joe Campbell

LION OF TAGORE



acrylic, ink, dye, charcoal, pigment, and white sand on canvas, 62x58 in 2023



I am not a Dancer. Yet movement and dance has become a part of my action painting process for a number of years, unconsciously in the beginning. I have been painting with my feet for at least 14 years. This work started on an uninhabited hill in Bayview, San Francisco, painted on a cylindrical drainage channel with charcoal powder and dance in 2015. The act of releasing your mind into the movement of your body is the first order of authentic dance. My partner at the time, Nilaya Sabnis, an Indian classical and modern dancer was involved in the practice of healing through embodiment. I participated in a few 5 Rhythms ecstatic dance workshops in those years, which is a way of connecting with the natural wisdom of the body through rhythm and movement, healing trauma and creating joy. This process aligned and furthered my painting practice, as the painting itself became an archive of the dance, a way of tracking and expressing a wave of freedom in movement. The performances of Alvin Ailey, Faustin Linyekula, Shamell Pitts, as well as Bharatanatyam classical dance were foundational in my appreciation.

Of course when you document movement, it changes things, it becomes performance - the law of relativity. So I slowly began to home in on the idea of performance, careful not to let it become empty, posty, or only for effect. When I brought this piece back out to the studio, I danced on it in the rain, danced on fire, completely inverting the image, letting go of form and beauty. When you truly let go of the outcome, of trying to preserve what it was or shape what it will be, then you reach the state of pure painting. But even letting go is not the end, for you have to bring something back from the bright void of pure being, some kind of seed or blossom from the next world, even if the grail has melted away.

In the last phase of work, I was reading Gram Hancock's 'Visionary' discussing the numerous therianthrope paintings - hybrid animal/human forms that appear across the world in caves representing the first examples of human art. I was particularly drawn to a drawing from the San people in South Africa of a man becoming a Lion. There is thrill in the unknowability in these drawings, wonder in the motivations of these awakening artists. As I paint I imagine the strands of color, music, charcoal, ochre, fire, dance, and storytelling weaving together a divine invocation in the dawn of human consciousness. I pursue the primal reason for making art, like the lioness.

VOICE & VEIL



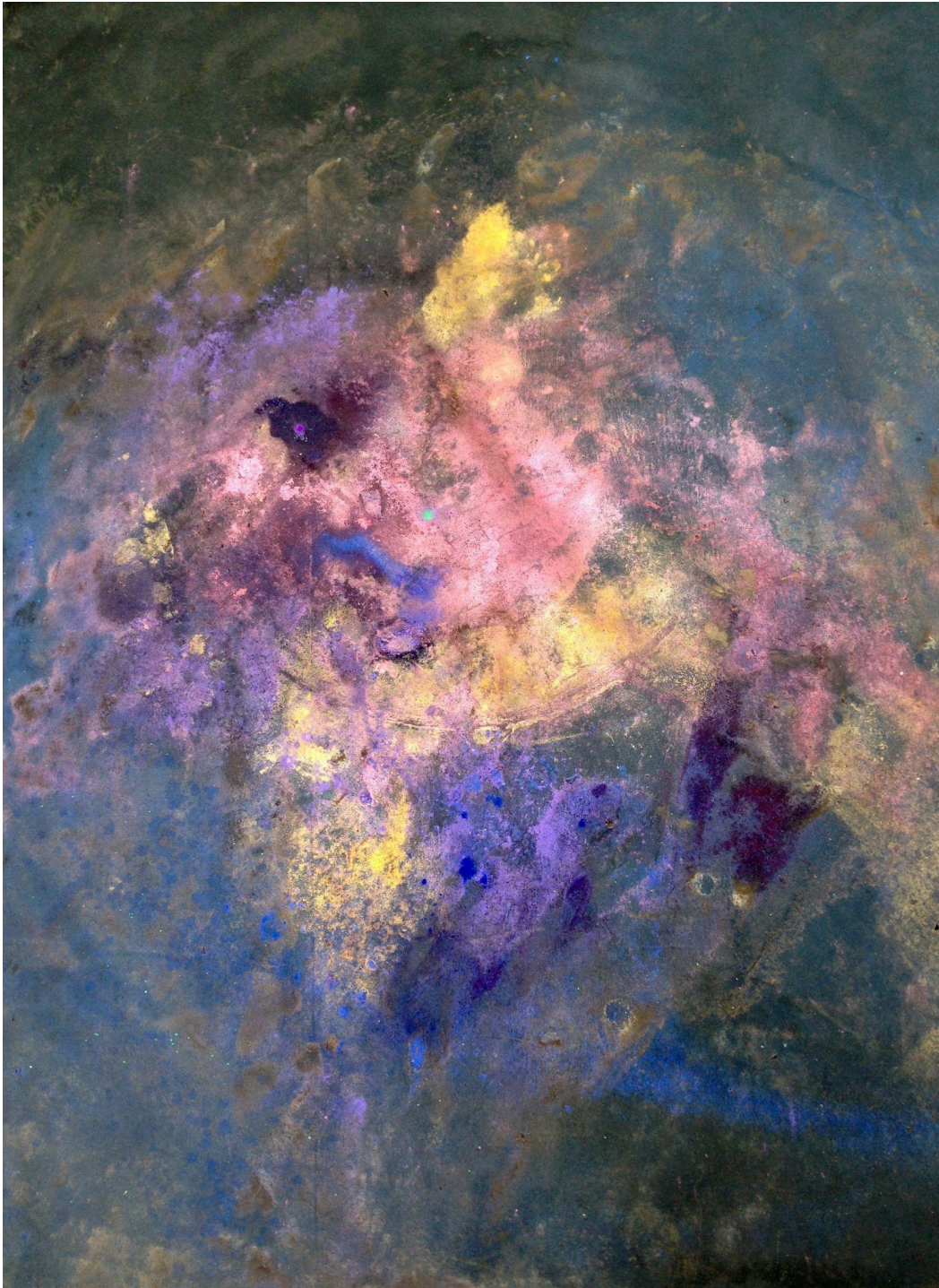
acrylic, ink and oil on canvas, 62x54 in 2009

I was under One Brooklyn Bridge, doing a studio residency with Boffo NYC in 09, and had just come back from India with sheets of silk. From Shanghai, Ziggy described looking out into the mountains, the moon above, and two lovers; though they could not see each other, they could each see the moon and this was just enough, almost the same. She described the mountains as if taking me into her dreams, I could see the ethereal light on the mountain and her sitting in the night's mist.

I painted on the silk, which lay atop a purple-black primed canvas, imparting her vision of the mountains. I could render only as far as my mind's eye could create from her words, so the painting on silk conveyed my limits of vision, the silk acting as a veil and membrane. The drier paint stayed on the silk surface and the wetter paint would seep through. Behind the silk, what I could not see, was the true vision - the truth of the dream, more wondrously complex and elegantly simple than I could imagine. The silk acts as a permeable borderline between two worlds, and as a veil, it reveals and hides, just as the moon above the lovers. It is both a connection and separation, like a cloud, like love, an incomplete comprehension between heaven and earth.

I gave the purple silk to Z, who is a painter. In Pakistan, she painted the distant lovers under the moon, not knowing I had painted the same vision, on the same silk. 11 years of moons later, we found each other.

HEY JUDE



acrylic, ink, dye, earth, and pigment on canvas, 60x47 in 2020

This piece was outside in spring storms of 2020 for almost 3 weeks.

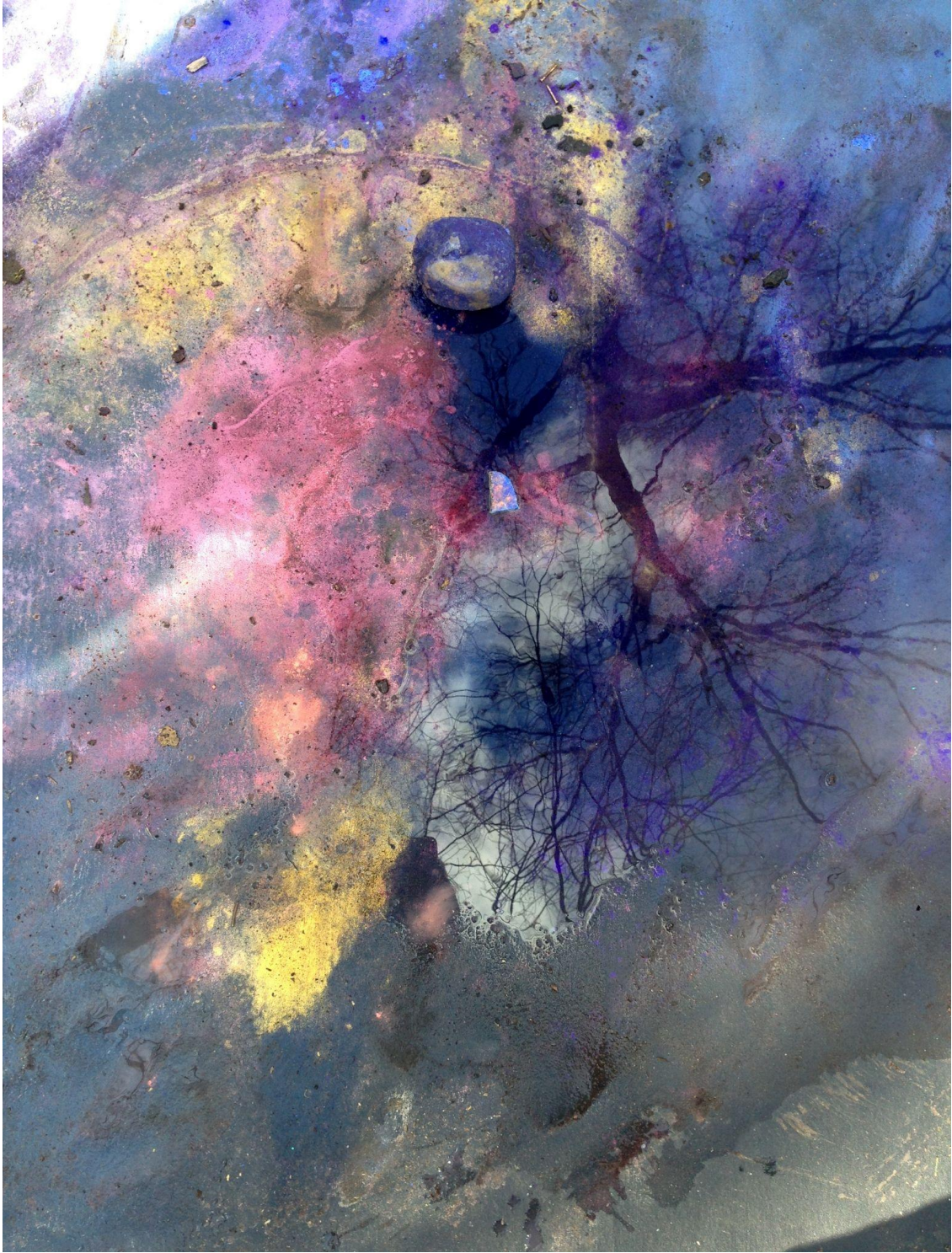
The purple had become puddles, the gold that had dried had stayed on the mountain, the copper pink sank so I flung more into the water, like washing into a great birth of stars. The blue glass was bare so I dashed on some gold which swirled into the stream like neutron stars colliding and showering the cosmos with gods. Purple poured on the small stone, the one stone to step across the stream, swording the violet gold silted lakes. The blue outside the ring was dirty with rusty sand and nails so I peppered it with a young Venetian azzurra that immediately became old in the downpour.

I stopped, felt the rain water going through to my shoulders, now the morning had washed away the dream, but now the dreamer was washing away the morning, and I realized, neither was washed away. It was all there, in the water, unfixed, unlike it ever was or ever would be, swimming together like Orca in the Amethyst milk.

The white- time- had all but disappeared, again and again.

*Perhaps it wasn't meant to stay in this moving bead,
but dissipate into an ever so faint brightening.*

I heaved on the misshapen tractor tire and covered the center with a blue pearl canvas. I was wondering how I would tell you about the painting and the morning, a melody entered my thoughts that was always there - *Hey Jude*.



THE RISING



acrylic, ink, pigment, brick dust on canvas, 65x44 in 2017

'The Rising' takes its name and power from the Springsteen song of the same title. The first time I saw him live was solo in Atlantic City 2005. We got lost in Trenton, arrived about an hour late, and were ushered in during 'The Rising.'

Everything just dropped away, all heaviness turned levity, the reversal of gravity, the levitational, The Rising.

His performance expresses a difference between the belief that one's soul has an independent destiny and the understanding that our souls are all somehow woven together, that we 'all sorta rise and fall somewhere together.'

'How deeply can you inhabit your song?' Bruce espouses the value of being a craftsman with each tool you possess, knowing your limitation and coaxing the transcendence from that very place.

The painting draws from this experience- forging a chain of souls, embodied by rocks and round brick, that exist in the salty levitation of Atlantic Ocean ether, breaking the chain of destruction and abandonment, and reaching for a new one, present to the joy of being and rising together. Watching 'Long Time a Comin' with my father, I felt the profound feel of time, the same freedom coming from the heart of my father and I, a joy of being alive together, in Trenton ready to 'bury my old soul and dance on its grave.'

BONEYARD / KEROUAC'S LAST DREAM



acrylic, ink, pastel, organic material, and oil on canvas, 30x40 in 2010-2023

The canvas was worked on and left outside for half a year, becoming more and more formless, textured, and decomposed. Later, I was working on a series of drawings from a photo of Jack Kerouac (taken by John Cohen) bending down to listen to a recording of himself. I resurrected the old canvas and in fast expressionist strokes laid down the image. With a nail, I scratched part of a poem I wrote in India that echoed 'Mexico City Blues' chorus 230. It seemed by the end I had something of a self-portrait. Then I turned it upside down. The title is an ode to Ramblin' Jack Eliot, who put out an album with this title in 1981.

*Love's multitudinous boneyard
Of decay / The spilled milk of heroes..*

-Jack Kerouac

HIGHWAY 61



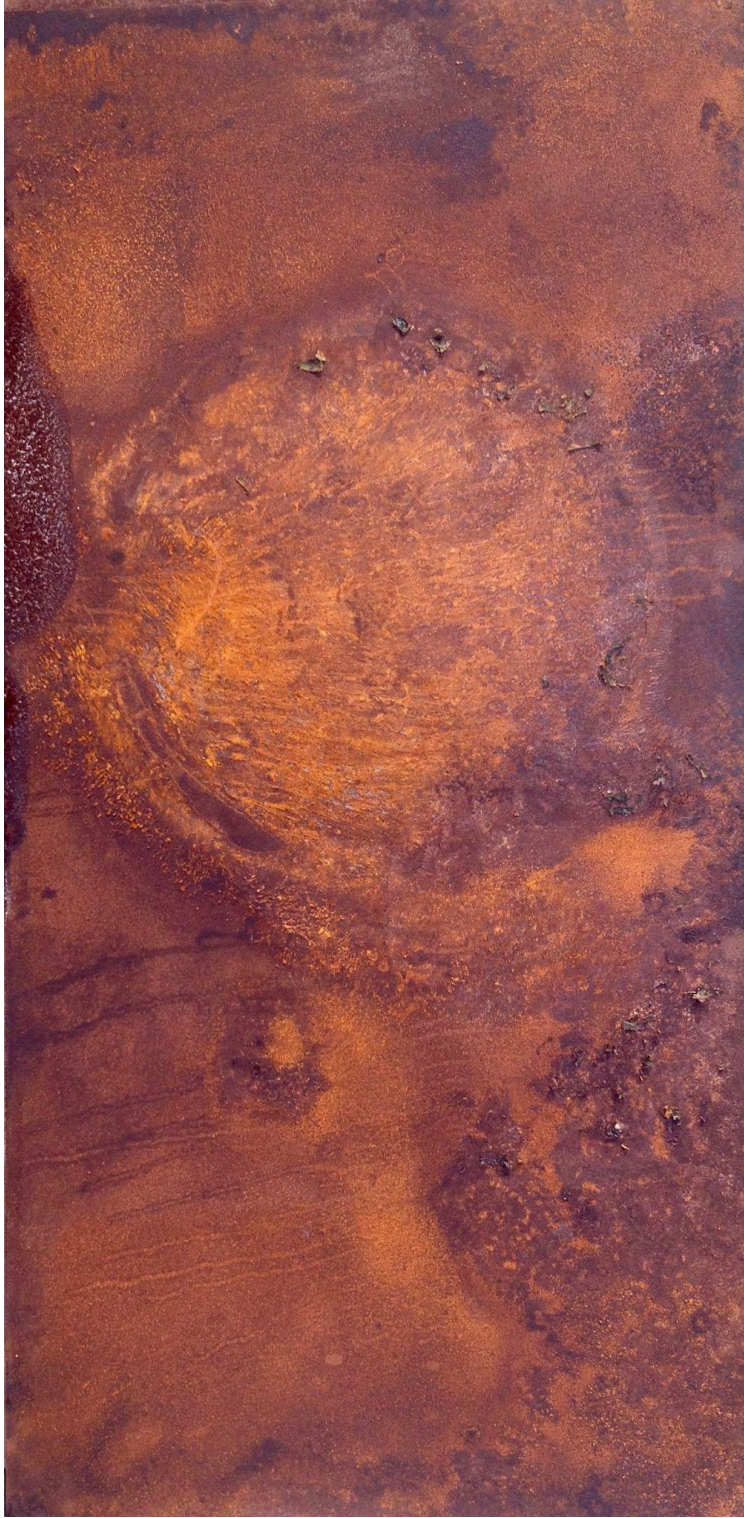
acrylic, ink and rocks on canvas, 61 x 51 in. 2009

Highway 61 is the tiny highway that goes through the Delta, shadowing the Mississippi, the bloodstream of America, where the fundamental American music arose in the wake of the Reconstruction. North of Vicksburg in the early evening, Mississippi Gann, Brutus, the great Boxer and I were driving down to New Orleans. Exactly when Dylan's 'Highway 61' came on, we felt the ghost of Robert Johnson, the legendary bluesman, jump into our car and scatter the song into a fevered howl. The radio never worked again and we left that Nissan in Memphis.

I brought some gravel from this road back to my studio which was in a former Jehovah's witness Bible printing factory in Brooklyn Heights. I imagined the motion of the ghost of this bluesman, his saunter through small Delta towns like Hazelhurst and Tunica, riding the blind with a hellhound on his trail, his alleged transaction with the Devil at the crossroads, the whites of his gleaming eyes in the few photographs of him, and the lines in the road. I shook the wet canvas like a small earthquake, and the jumping stones created the marks of paint. Many of the outward pools of watery paint rivered back into the center, as did the rocks, creating a topography like a delta. Many generations of Robert Johnson portraits had begun.



TIGER REBORN

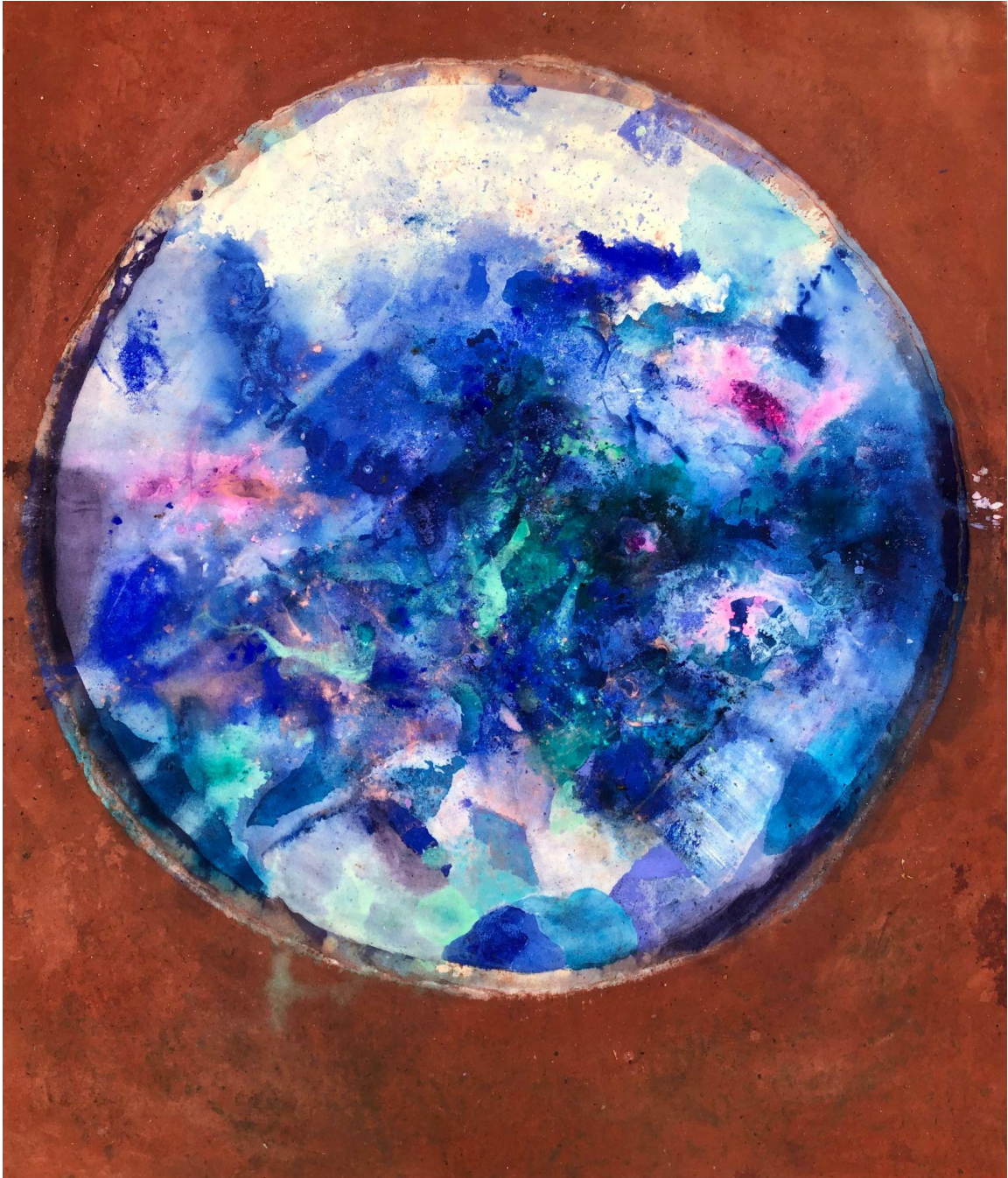


Oxidation on steel, 96x48 in. 2016

This 8x4 foot piece of steel was placed in the tidal zone of the San Francisco Bay after I got my MFA at the San Francisco Art Institute. My Grandmother, Booboo's spirit had this day just left her body like a great Owl and was flying home. Just a few days earlier when I sat by her, she looked like a Tiger staring up into the eternal good night. When the steel was underwater I wept soundlessly as Z and I made a fire on the windy north shore, and the iridescent pearl winged thing of the moon visited us again. During low tide the steel was exposed, I imagined the perfect circle was drawn by the sea, sorrow, by the air and by her spirit coming home, completing the circle.



BLUE PEARL



acrylic, pigment, ink, and dye on canvas, 60x50 in. 2020

'Watching this tender, infinitely fascinating light, you become aware of your true glory. Though smaller than a sesame seed, the Blue Pearl contains the entire universe. It is the light of God, the form of God within you. This is divinity, this is the greatness that lies within a human being. This is the true wonder of humanity. Therefore, perceive that light.'

-Swami Muktananda

Blue Pearl was done in the Inner Magenta series of 2020. Inner Magenta was a process of finishing each piece with Love, forgiveness, fire, water, space, nothing - whatever the painting/ life cycle / story called for completion. It corresponds to a meditation of Hamsa or 'I am That.' This mediation is as natural as breathing. From the poem of the 'Blue Pearl' :

I paint green, the Sieneese grass wraps round the brown of your skin as you dissolve into water light, catch a wave and rain hangs in the sky

It must be some form of Heaven we wash to from here, boarding into the unfolding lotus

now collapsed with the motion of the water, not one with, but very close, a meeting of minds, yours mine the ocean

Every wave, a chance to rise, a chance to dive under and roll up the back, to backslide and swallow water, to waver, stand firm and fall

Under the waves, we are near the lurking 'something of childhood's elusive twilight'

We have healed each other's quietest worlds

To come up for air, to call your name, to sing your electric, to know its silence

You ride one back to land, completing one world ripple

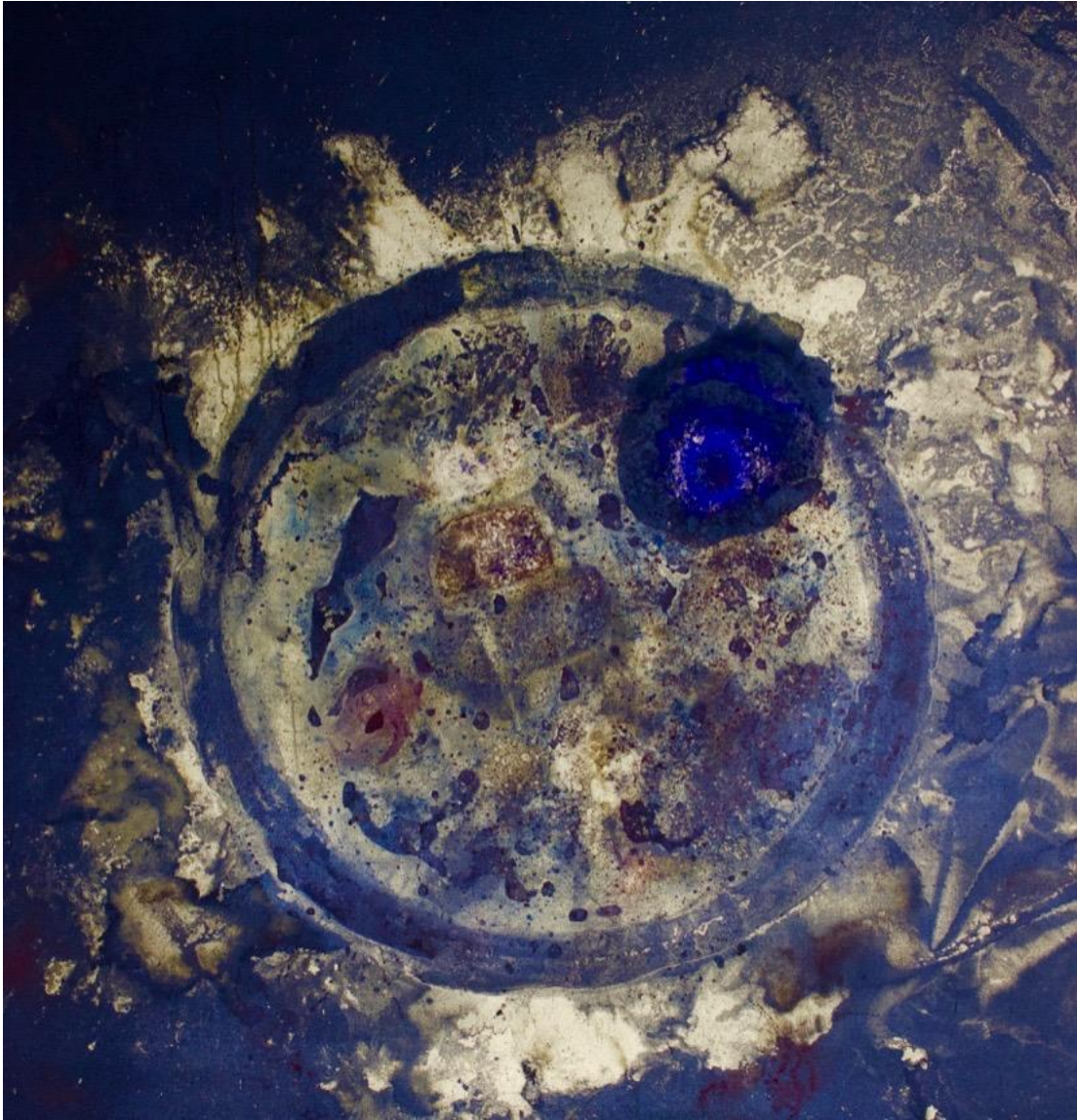
There's the pink holi, a pool on turquoise, silver red Lila, children together in divine play

From your seat on the mountain of spirit, veins of magenta wings pulse lightning from your azure dragon alight

You see the sphereing ocean in one drop

Blue pearl

JOHN'S STAR



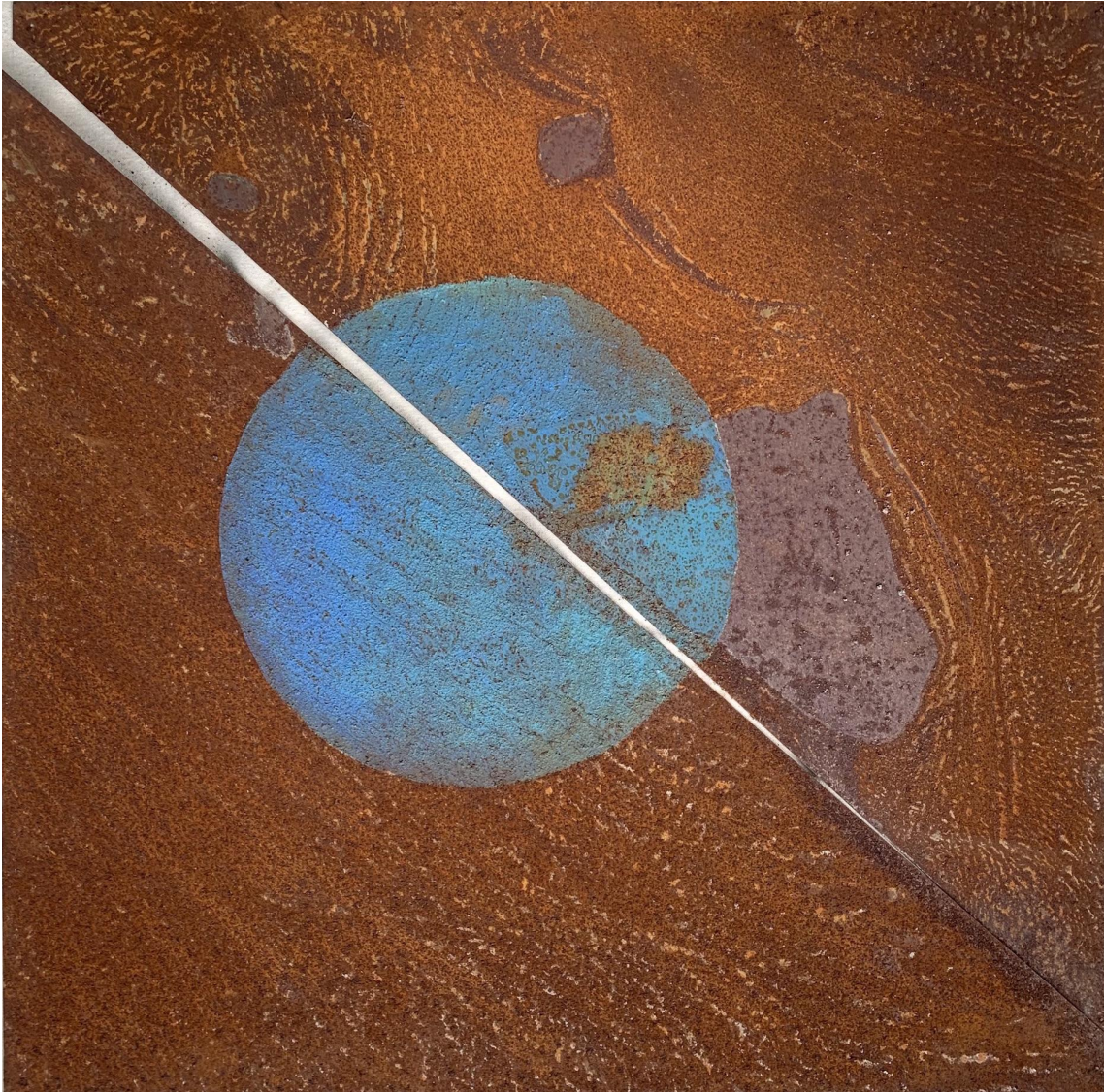
acrylic, ink, pigment and brick dust on canvas, 54x54 in 2016

I painted John's Star in San Francisco during the final year of my MFA. I had just received a call that my father had fallen off his bike drunk and was taken to the hospital in NJ unconscious, clutching a golden coin of Pope John Paul II. I was painting with a tire that I heaved out of the Bay with my brother in law at the time. There were hundreds of tires in the bay stranded at low tide, once agents of motion now stuck. I painted with dozens of rounded bricks harvested from the tidal zone as well - bricks that once were homes, collapsed from earthquakes, hauled out to create the landfill we were standing (living) upon, and now were rounded from the tides. These bricks occurred to me the perfect embodiment of the tidal dance of man and nature, mind and universe.

I painted with a gold pigment that my sister and I found in a magical color store in Venice, which floats like a kilonova upon the water. One brick was filled with blue and became a fundamental point of healing, a place on the wheel where the hidden power shines through or the next world reveals its nature. Soon after, my father woke up. He woke up and committed to sobriety in a way that shook our world with hope.



UNBROKEN HOMES



acrylic and oxidation on steel, 24x24 in. 2018

UnBroken Homes is a part of a larger project about what it means to find and co-create a home that supports and accommodates all other ideas and senses of home. The genesis of this came from a poem from a dream in Venice -

I remember these 2
diagonals of the same square were
not in the ocean but in the calm Tomales Bay
which runs directly through
the San Andreas fault
They weren't together
but in different places along the river

I waded through the warm shallow water
waving my phone light at slippery
reflections trying to find
2 somethings
2 of us
2 broken wholes lost
in dark shallow history

In this moment or string
of moments of wounding
seismic cleaving of
Pluto howling
We reach beyond and within
ourselves like
a flooded tree

Perhaps we find something
that cannot be broken
Something
that has remained
Unbroken

Perhaps we rummage
through the wreckage to
find a few significant shards
enough that we can carry and
move on with

QUICKSILVER WHITE TIGER CHARIOT TRIPTYCH



acrylic, ink, pigment, sand, collage, spray paint, and oxidation on steel, 48x132 in 2016-23



Quicksilver started in the San Francisco Bay. During my MFA studies in 2016, I developed a technique of placing cold rolled steel in the tidal zones of the Pacific Ocean and Bay. Hightide would immerse the steel and during low tide the sea air would oxidize the saltwater bathed steel allowing the ocean's tidal motion to be exposed. I was stepping out of the way of the process and allowing the ocean to draw itself.

Back in my studio in the Dogpatch, I spilled paint on the sheet of steel and the piece languished in Treasure Island for 5 years. When I got the piece back to New Jersey in 2021, I finally felt ready to inject the painter, myself, back into the equation. I painted with fire and the White Tiger technique. I was reading in The Dragon Tiger manual about a Taoist alchemical connection between fire in the heart of the Yin / lunar energy of the Tiger and the element of quicksilver. Though I didn't understand it, the action of painting seemed to unfold the idea without grasping it.

My friends in Houston wanted to acquire a triptych of steel pieces that would be installed outside. An essential part of the steel work is understanding and appreciating that they will continue to evolve, to age and deepen with water and oxygen just as everything else does, just as viewers will age in a relationship with the art. Now Quicksilver stands outside, braving the Texas rain, and the snails are eating away a collaged photo of the artist trying to lift a wheel out of the Bay.



Neil Enggist of Swiss and Taiwanese descent, was born and raised in Princeton, New Jersey. His father is a stained glass artist and mother worked for the state. Growing up, Enggist drew, played soccer and saxophone. He studied fine arts at Washington University in St. Louis and Santa Reparata in Florence. For the next 20 years he followed the great performances of color into the mountains, canyons, coastlines, and rivers across the US, Europe, China, and India. His 'Nature action paintings' are composed within a system of nature, performing ecologically harmonic phrases in a tidal conversation between human spirit and the wild. Enggist earned his MFA at San Francisco Art Institute in 2016 where he made paintings on steel in the tidal zones of the Bay Area incorporating ideas of performance and sculpture embedded in the earth art movement. Enggist has participated in a number of art residencies including the Lucid Art Foundation in Point Reyes, CA, and journeyed to the land of his grandmother to paint in Shanghai and the Yellow Mountains in 2019. Through his travels, Enggist developed a body of painting and poetry shown in New York, Milan, Mumbai, Luzern, and Paris. Along the way he saw Bob Dylan in concert around 40 times. During Several summers he worked with master gardener, Andre Ammann, realizing landscape projects around Luzern. In 2020 Enggist painted between NJ and SF, painting in the Sequoia forest, Lands End, Yosemite, Trinity River, Big Sur, the Central Valley, writing a book of mystical Love poetry. He currently paints and makes stained glass in Taos, New Mexico with his wife, artist Ziggy Khan, working together on a multi-media album weaving memory, music, painting, skiing, meditation, and poetry inspired by Japanese tanka. In 2023 Enggist had 2 'I am the Mountain' shows in Switzerland, worked on a sea and Tantra inspired series in Liguria, Italy, and will show in Miami.

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