

Layers of Time

Mark Perlman

Encaustic Paintings 1987–2020



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GRETCHEN GILES

CHESTER ARNOLD

DeWITT CHENG

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Blackney Press / 2021

*This book was made possible
by the generous support of*

Nancy Toomey Gallery, San Francisco, California

Pryor Fine Art, Atlanta, Georgia

Stremmel Gallery, Reno, Nevada

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ISBN: 978-1-63684-047-5

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CAST - 60 x 48 - 1998

FOR

Ina, whose constant warmth and companionship has helped to keep me grounded and focused over the past forty-eight years.

AND

Ashley whose love and positive energy has inspired me every day since her birth to be a better person and painter.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Although I have been painting for fifty years, many days it feels as though I am stepping to the canvas for the first time. In order to keep the creative act alive, I feel it is essential to reinvent myself through the act of abandoning some of the processes that took many years to develop in order to make room for ideas that may push me towards unpredictable possibilities and solutions.

My paintings are lost for roughly the first two-thirds of each painting. I enjoy the struggle of finding my way back to a clarity that makes sense to me. Working on about six paintings at a time maintains freshness, which helps a great deal in not overworking any one piece. The editing is paramount when deciding if the painting is complete.

Taking chances doesn't always pay off when beginning a new series of paintings. However, the work usually finds a path that leads me to discovering a part of myself that has been camouflaged and is waiting to be revealed.

The central core of my work always remains intact given that I trust my instincts and remain curious about the infinite possibilities available. What keeps painting vital to me is that the choices can be conceptual, technical, or practical.

Although I seldom start with a preconceived image, I eventually determine where I want to travel with each painting. Making a painting is like being blindfolded and asked to walk around the land I have lived on for most of my life, except with cliffs surrounding the borders. Although I'm familiar with the space, there is always the danger of going too far in any one direction.

Over the years I have been continually fascinated by the process of combining luminosity with the layered surfaces of buried or forgotten images. To record my present and past thoughts and memories, I place as many images, markings, and words as possible into the process of each painting. I am constantly editing myself in hopes of reaching a balance of noise and solitude.

Inspiration comes through many sources, including music, books, nature, films, history, and political news. I am an avid surveyor of museums and galleries, and I take my time in deciding when to incorporate outside influences into my work.

I believe that the body has a memory of its own after it has been working for many years. My mind sometimes needs to follow the acts performed while resisting judgment until the work has time to rest. The formal and structural decisions can then be made by adding or subtracting from my first original impulse.

My hope is to challenge myself in the coming years and discover new ways to maintain passion and curiosity.

Mark Perlman
December, 2020



GAZE – 48 x 48 – 2019

SHOWER – 84 x 72 – 2005

The element of the unexpected therefore becomes an essential part of Perlman's work, pushing the artist in new directions and inviting the viewer to follow or, better yet, to make their own discoveries hidden in the deep veils and colors and lines, that activate and energize the surface of these paintings.

MICHAEL SCHWAGER



COUNTDOWN – 72 x 60 – 2006

The viewer might find in these paintings the tussle of contact sports, or the strategic give-and-take of a board game. But a visual style this full, this ornate, this invested with incident, this carefully planned and yet this exuberantly wrought is bound to inspire metaphor. Perlman's abstractions, with their uncanny ability to encompass macrocosm and microcosm at once, invite readings as rich with possibility as the place and time that produced them.

PETER FRANK



PRAIRIE – 84 x 96 – 2019

The terrain of Perlman's earlier denser painting through which we walked (i.e., looked) has given way to a broad plain or meadow, perhaps crossed with streams or trees. We've not been, or seen here before, but we've been (seen) many places like it. The geography, and topography, of Perlman's work is distinctive, but not altogether foreign.

PETER FRANK

