

ELIZABETH PAIGESMITH

venice california

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JENNIFER WOLF “BLOOM”

WHAT:

BLOOM - Solo exhibition by Jennifer Wolf, featuring hand-ground pigment paintings, video and photography.

WHEN:

Opening reception Saturday November 3 from 7-10 pm
Exhibition runs November 3rd - November 30th 2007

WHERE:

Elizabeth Paige Smith Atelier - 1423 Abbot Kinney Blvd, Venice CA 90291

-The undeniable beauty of Jennifer Wolf's paintings elicit an almost sensual attraction from the viewer. Her process of collecting raw materials and producing powder pigments from which she paints results in an expression of her materials as well as her self.

Jennifer Wolf: Bloom
Interviewed by Shana Nys Dambrot
Los Angeles 2007

The only downside of having been privileged to watch up close the evolution of Jennifer Wolf's style for almost a decade now, is that while my respect and almost sensual attraction to her paintings has but grown, I am concerned that having written about her work previously on more than one occasion, I may have already used all the best words to get to the heart of the matter. Certainly over the years her style has changed, becoming more organic, riskier, and more complex visually even as her process became more streamlined. Some time ago I called her an Abstract Expressionist but I see now that I was mistaken, for in a very real sense it is not her own animus she is expressing, but that of her materials.

Everyone stipulates to and rushes past the undeniable beauty of the work and just wants to know how she does it.

So the artist and I conceived a conversation the better to explore the mysterious alchemy of her self-imposed ritual. Tales of adventure are always more satisfying in the first person.

SND: So Jen, for this exhibition you seem to be branching out a little into other media realms, with photography, video and installation, but the anchor is this recent painting from the Flow series, so I'd like to start there. Can you talk a little bit about how these paintings are made? Start in the caves.

JW: Basically, I collect the raw materials, grind them up with a mortar and pestle and then tumble those materials in a rock tumbler for numerous hours to produce powder pigments of varying particle sizes. I began exploring this particular way of making paint in a body of work produced in 2003 called Cavings. The paintings featured mineral pigments that I collected from the Paleolithic cave site region of Southern France. I was using the same pigments that the local artists had used 40,000 years ago to make our earliest known paintings. I had been playing with powder pigments for some year's prior, but this was the first time I incorporated the idea of using such thematically significant pigment.

SND: And I would imagine given the volatile and delicate nature of that process that working on such a large scale presented its own challenges...

JW: One of the challenges is the preciousness of the pigment and the difficulty of collecting it. Since my palette is geographically specific and often remote, I am presented with the reality of a finite supply of color. When I run out of a specific pigment, I need to travel back to the original place of collection to replenish my stash. That could mean either my hometown of Ventura, CA. or that little town in the South of France where that one incredible vein of yellow sandstone occurs. Another challenge is scaling up a specific mark or composition. Also, there's the physical challenge of manipulating so much paint in a controlled yet organic manner.

SND: And there's a formal similarity with the video imagery (black and white, teeming disintegration of the earthy matter) but also the addition of a soundtrack (please tell me about the music choice if you could) and of course, movement. Would you say that the video represents to some degree the painting process? Or is it simpler than that? Why make the jump to video?

JW: The song I chose is called "Eternal River" by the "Open Door Orchestra" It features the extraordinary talent of two of my good friends, Jon Ossman and Shannon Michael Terry, whose work was also featured in the 2003 Cavings exhibition. The music I choose to listen to while I'm painting has a big impact on my work. I wanted the video to create an opportunity for the viewer to experience the kind of relationship I often feel between a song and a particular movement in a painting. Similar to my painting approach where the act of making each work happens in one sitting, I shot the video piece in a single shot of 9 minutes and 21 seconds. There has been no editing in either case. Both the paintings and the video celebrate movement without question.

SND: And the photograph and powder-pigment installation, those seem to further draw out and highlight aspects of the physical process of painting. What do you hope to add to the understanding of the paintings by these aspects?

JW: The process of making paint enhances my own experience of the work so I want to illuminate that process as beautifully and as compelling as I can. The storyboard format of the photograph presents some of the stages the material goes through to become a pigment, while the raw material and pigment installation gives the viewer a chance to see the organic forms and powders before they are reconstituted into the paintings on the walls. In a way I'm providing the lineage, or family history of the work. I am interested in the origins of my palette, and the effect that has on what I make.

ABOUT ELIZABETH PAIGE SMITH GALLERY

Electric colors and sculptural forms are turnings heads on Abbot Kinney Boulevard in Venice, California. Finding a love for interesting and beautiful esthetics in her youth, Elizabeth Paige Smith has established herself as a talented and influential artist in Los Angeles. The atelier that opened in April 2006 is rapidly gaining attention as a distinct gallery in a city known for its artistic innovation. Her exhibition of multi-media works distinguishes the space as an important site for the future of art in L.A.

As a haven for all forms of art, sculpture, and design, Elizabeth is creating a space that will foster a dialogue between different artistic communities. Seeing a need for communication between emerging movements, her Garden Salon brings artists together at her space in Venice in a vortex of artistic energy; where collaboration, discussion, and appreciation of art are the status quo. The Atelier will also host a series of invitation events for the public to inform the larger community of the impact of this collaboration.

Music, art, film, and all artistic outlets are represented in a way that allows these groups to network their creativity. Hoping to bridge different communities, Elizabeth is setting the stage for a new phase of art in Los Angeles where all mediums can influence and learn from one another.

NOTE:

For further information you are invited to take a look at www.elizabethpaigesmith.com

CONTACT:

Elizabeth Paige Smith
(310) 392 8060
elizabeth@epsdesign.com

Romina Djelosevic
(310) 392 8060
atelierassistant@gmail.com

SELECT IMAGES



Hand Ground Coral

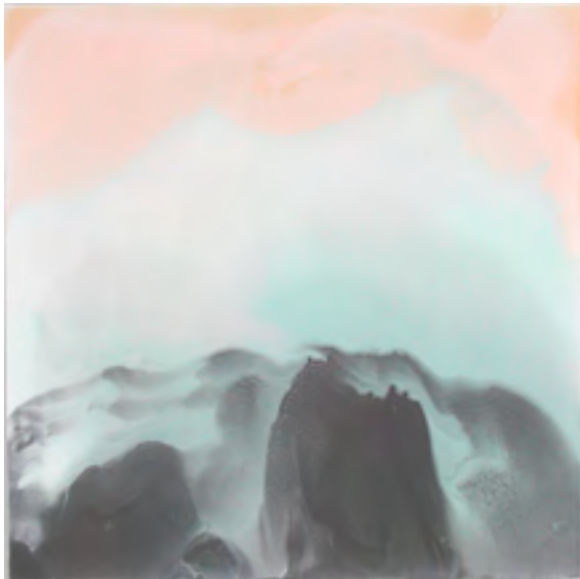
Digital C-Print

44" x 7.5"

\$850



Study Pigment on Wood 12" x 12" \$600



Tourmaline Mountains Pigment on Wood 42" x 42" \$4850