



DICK FOLSE

Abstracted Landscapes

The Paintings of
DICK FOLSE

Abstracted Landscapes

December 2 — 31, 2016



601 N. East Street
Bloomington, IL 61701

Dick Folse distills visual perceptions into blocks and rivulets of color. Like the ancient philosopher Heraclitus, his understanding of the world is one of persistent flux and change. While being in nature and studying the landscape is the starting point for Folse's paintings, recording specific and particular features is of only limited concern to him. He works from memories of a place and its related locations. Each landscape becomes manifest in a finished work through some aspects of its physical features, but also through what Folse remembers of a site and his own thoughts and actions as he was within its confines.

Folse is of a generation of painters which has had a thorough grounding in the study of art, critical theory, and color science. As a result of his training, no mark can be made completely indifferently. Yet, he has allowed an informed spontaneity to shape his work. In the process of using aerosol paint, he relinquishes some degree of control. In passages within the works in which he uses a loaded brushstroke, there can be a buildup of surface texture that attests to the pressure of his hand in just a given moment. The paintings seem to have been formed surely and rapidly, with color and texture transforming observable realities into deeply personal meditations on the meaning of place.

With the paintings in this exhibition, it is these more liberated passages, especially the bursts of brilliant color, which entice us first. The strident color speaks to emotional reactions as personal as joy or delight, and they form a counterpoint to the subtle geometry that Folse uses to organize his compositions, favoring either layers of horizontals or repeated networks of horizontals and verticals. While the strokes and dashes of excited color carry the psychological intensity of the works, the implicit sense of geometry is something like a proscenium stage. The geometries are essentially neutral in emotional content, and they remind us that as we see a landscape, we give structure to it. We frame a scene conceptually and give it meaning according to our own malleable and shifting understandings.

The use of text or graphic imagery collaged into in Folse's paintings tempts us to pull close, scrutinize, and read new layers of meaning into the works. However, as the text is not in English and it is incomplete, we may be thwarted in establishing any specific meaning. The collage elements invigorate the surface, and as materials of the contemporary publishing industry, they speak to the timely rather than the timeless. They insert a further layer of uncertainty and contingency into the paintings that is appropriate to our era.

For many, the most profound and lasting impact of Folse's paintings may well be his use of color. His palette is exaggerated and baroque, luscious and enticing. Intense greens, violets, and yellows nearly catapult from the surface. Color asserts that Folse's paintings originated in a mood of optimism. These are landscapes that are luminous, romantic, and glorified.

— Gisele Atterberry



Installation views of the Armstrong Gallery at the McLean County Arts Center in Bloomington, Illinois.

Abstracted Landscapes features sixteen paintings. The show is generously sponsored by Mary Anderson, Donna & Darrell Hartweg, and Carolyn & Paul Jarvis.



(above)
06-19-2015 Lavender Fields
Oil on Linen
20" x 24"
2015

(left)
05-21-2015 Prairie Grass
Oil on Wood Panel
36" x 36"
2015



(above)
05-12-2011 Fields of Dreams
Oil on Wood Panels
12" x 12" (each)
2011

(left)
01-14-2014 Pink Fields
Oil on Wood Panel
36" x 36"
2014



(above)
10-30-2016 Modern Triptych
Oil on Wood Panel
20" x 24" (each)
2016



(above)
06-29-2016 Tokyo
Oil and Collage on Linen
22" x 22"
2016

(left)
07-21-2016 Grid
Oil and Collage on Linen
30" x 30"
2016



(above)
10-15-2016 **Blue Mountains**
Oil and Aerosol Paint on Linen
60" x 60"
2016

(left)
06-15-2016 **Bridge and River**
Oil and Aerosol Paint on Wood Panel
12" x 12"
2016



(above)
10-01-2016 Red Sky
Oil and Aerosol Paint on Linen
48" x 48"
2016

(left)
07-22-2016 Map 14
Oil and Collage on Linen
26" x 26"
2016



(above)
07-08-2016 Onishi 1
Oil and Collage on Linen
30" x 30"
2016

(left)
06-28-2016 Onishi 2
Oil and Aerosol Paint on Linen
30" x 30"
2016



(above)
02-23-2016 Hillside Village
Oil and Collage on Wood Panel
12" x 12"
2016

(right)
12-24-2015 Barcelona
Oil and Collage on Wood Panel
12" x 12"
2015

(left)
02-24-2016 Mid-Century Neighborhood
Oil and Collage on Wood Panel
10" x 10"
2015



Artist Statement

Dick Folse has been a professional artist for thirty years, exhibiting nationally and internationally throughout his career. He works from his imagination, and often in a studio without visual references. Inspiration comes from specific places, but the work does not represent any one place or view; rather, it is a sense of the places the artist knows well, fictitiously portrayed. The artist sets up processes for artmaking that create unfactored results – such as using aerosol paint with masking elements or pooling ink that runs unexpectedly across the substrate – and accidental occurrences are embraced. Over his career, Dick has drifted across a continuum of landscape painting between representation and abstraction.

Dick earned an MFA in studio art from Illinois State University in 1990. He resides in Bloomington, Illinois, with his family and works as an administrator at Illinois Wesleyan University.

Select Exhibitions

Solo Exhibitions

McLean County Art Center, Bloomington, Illinois – 2016
Kelly's Bakery Gallery, Bloomington, Illinois – 2014
Hoogland Center for the Arts, Springfield, Illinois – 2014
Kelly's Bakery Gallery, Bloomington, Illinois – 2012
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Kelly's Bakery Gallery, Bloomington, Illinois – 2009
IAA Gallery, Bloomington, Illinois – 2008
Kettering Art Center, Kettering, Ohio – 1991
Four Seasons Art Center, Springfield, Illinois – 1991
Peoria Art Guild, Peoria, Illinois – 1991
Four Seasons Art Center, Springfield, Illinois – 1990
Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois – 1990
Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois – 1988

Two-Person Exhibitions

Quad Cities Art Center, Davenport, Iowa – 1994 (with painter Susan Maakestad)
Bradley University, Peoria, Illinois – 1993 (with ceramicist Rob Reedy)

Group Exhibitions

Kanna Fall Arts Festival, Onishi, Japan – 2016
Shiro Oni Studio Exhibit, Onishi, Japan – 2016
McLean County Art Center, Bloomington, Illinois – 2016
McLean County Art Center, Bloomington, Illinois – 2013
Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois – 2013
Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois – 2010
McLean County Art Center, Bloomington, Illinois – 2009
Prairie Art Alliance, Springfield, Illinois – 2009
Prairie Art Alliance, Springfield, Illinois – 2008
McLean County Art Center, Bloomington, Illinois – 2007



Dick Folse spent the summer of 2016 at the Shiro Oni Studio Artist Residency in Onishi, Japan. Joining eight other artists, he completed six exhibition paintings (five shown in this catalog) and 27 small paintings which were given to Onishi residents.

