

*Don Pollack*

ARTIST STATEMENT

My work comes from journeys and travel. Moving through the landscape, the presence of history saturates the experience. Painting oil on canvas, performance, and installations,— I am interested in experiencing the landscape,— past traumas and revelations eventually speak to the violent conflict on perspectives of the land, the spaces we inhabit, inextricably forget that we are a part of, we conquer, and we picture. Through a physical journey, the measures of my work attempts to make a space for knowing the North American landscape.

Often, my paintings document a landscape that flows between two realities: one outside the picture attempting to capture nature and one inside the material flow of abstracting my experience of space.

The process begins by operating within a traditional mode of landscape painting and observation. Here my painting process explores light, shadows, and transparency akin to the Hudson River School tradition. At the other end, my process begins by looking back at the way I look at nature and document the emotional space that experience holds for me in the land, memory and history.

And then I meet somewhere in the middle where things begin to drip, fall apart, breakup and transform,— attempting to be democratic, but this is a synthetic map or an imposition of grids on the land. The artificial infiltrates the natural world,— I am at once inside the surrounding space and simultaneously outside it looking back at the garden, lamenting the loss of nature and the wild areas. I see nature in the rough cover under a railroad trestle. It becomes a marker of sorts but I am more interested in the mysteries that occupy this secret place and something begins to make the landscape more fluid. Spirits are real here in the once forgotten corners of 150 years ago.

I make a canvas and leave it outside in a summer storm and a drip painting is made during the rain. This surface becomes a different landscape attempting to be in cooperation with nature. Another canvas is tied to an oak for a month in the woods and is stained from the inclemencies of sun and wind. This process of immersion outdoors yields a process of self consciousness and uncertainty and a looking forward. Another canvas emulates the futility of picturing nature while revealing its artifice. I am reminded that painting is ultimately a theater of manipulated information and nature is still a wild place full of conflict and way beyond my control.