

LINDA E. JONES

Traces

CHAMPLAIN COLLEGE
ART GALLERY

AUGUST 1—SEPTEMBER 13, 2019





LINDA E. JONES: TRACES

“Seeing inside,
measuring the unseen,
touching the pulses
and currents within.”

COVER Limbs 42" X 40" Digital print
with mixed media, 2008

LEFT Mark x Linda 72" x 63" oil, graphite
and mixed media on canvas, 2003

Foreward

DANA HEFFERN, DIRECTOR,
CHAMPLAIN COLLEGE ART GALLERY

Linda E. Jones has exhibited in museums and galleries throughout the United States. She is represented in both private and public collections. Jones received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in painting and lithography in 1980 from Antioch College and has been the recipient of numerous awards, residencies, and fellowships. She has an extensive career working with paint, photography, and encaustic mediums on paper, wood, and canvas. Jones finds influence in archaeology, medical references, and natural objects. Her work is visceral, intimate, familial, and is soundly seated in abstraction.

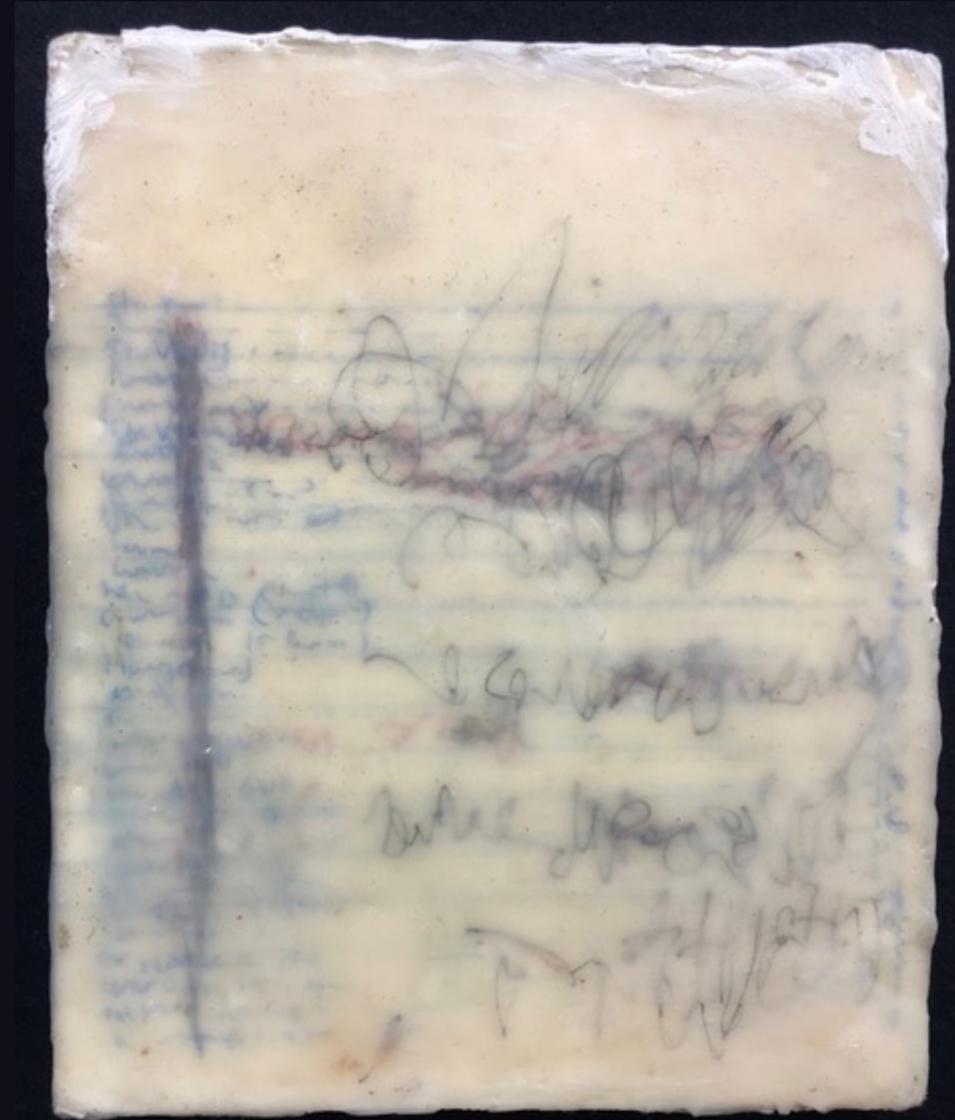
Traces is a retrospective of selected works from 1994–2018 as well as new work inspired by the artist's personal archaeological exploration. Jones will debut an installation inspired by Egyptian blue pigment, specifically from her visit to the ruined mud-brick, domed "tomb of the venerated saint" at the Fatimid Cemetery in Aswan, Egypt.

I find Jones' work to be objective yet subjective, abstract yet representational; it is pulsating with sentiments of love, death, rebirth, and redemption. The anatomy of *Traces* offers the viewer a new entryway into the artist's meaning-making work. Jones' lifelong themes of loss and empathy, life and decay fascinate. It is my hope you, the viewer, come to the work with the same sense of exploration and inquiry as I have.

I wish to thank the Office of the President and, specifically, Interim President Laurie Quinn for her continual support of the gallery.

The gallery at Champlain College will host *Traces*, August 1–September 13, 2019.

RIGHT *Emergence III*, 7"x 6", Encaustic,
graphite, rice papers, oil and mixed
media on wood panel, 2015



On Traces

CAMERON DAVIS, VISUAL ARTIST, COLLEAGUE, FRIEND—AUGUST 2019

Linda Jones' exhibition *Traces* reveals her curiosity about the physical and psychological thresholds that describe our fragile bodily incarnations. Her fascination is informed by a life marked by unexpected and inevitable personal loss. In this retrospective we witness Jones' persistent tracking of objects and places that become indicators of passage—tombs, medical detritus, decaying trees, and the less immediately understood yet related, tracks in the snow. They all explore the edge between physically here, and not here, and what gets left behind—traces.

Jones' vivid dreams further animate the threshold between the symbolic language of the imagination, with conceptual references. Her work does not make proclamations about living or dying per se or lead with predetermined ideas. Rather, Jones' process follows her nose. Her work intuitively responds to situations, objects, and places that resonate so deeply in her psyche that she is compelled to use the studio practice as a way to digest their meaning. Her desire for fleshy intimacy is further evidenced in the sensate material manipulation, whether paintings, altered photos, objects, or installation. Her work is influenced by her travels to Haiti, Scotland, and Nepal. It was the latter where, having already lost her first brother and her fiancé, she became altered by the Tibetan Buddhist understanding of death. And though not a self-ascribed Buddhist, she remains shaped by those ideas to this day. In this current exhibition we find her later in life responding to her experiences in Egypt. It is almost as if the sanitized dying practices of contemporary American culture make it necessary for Jones to be jolted alert by other cultures' ritual artifacts in order to gain access to her own interior responses. As viewers we are invited into these material narratives of sense making. We are left to create our own meaning, with titles as signposts for our enigmatic apprehensions.

You can see the evolution of her intuitive exploration in her own description of the installation *Cradling: Last Sound, Last Breath*:

"While in Aswan I was exploring an Islamic cemetery. In the middle of this arid, monochromatic place, I stumbled across a tomb—one that sang loudly to me from a distance ... What absolutely stunned me was the use of intense blue pigment ...contrasting against the pale ochre/red oxide landscape. ... It appeared to be part of an offering. ... Upon closer inspection I could see other offerings smothered in the blue: a scarf, corn, and other things too blurred by the pigment ... to be identified.

"Only recently did I learn that this was a Fatimid Cemetery and the domed tomb was that of a venerated saint, or imam.

"I had never intended to respond so personally or to re-create the tomb of a saint. After my father died, I saw in my tomb photograph details of hearing aids. When I cleaned out my father's apartment, I found many old hearing aids. The ones most precious to me were the ones he wore the night that he died—his last sound heard. I then decided to use them in this piece. I also decided to add his last, ever-present linen handkerchief, not unlike the scarf in the tomb. In the middle of creating the piece I had a very strong emotional reaction. I realized that I wanted to build a protective, safe, comforting cradle. In this I would add the breathing tube removed from my brother before he died in hospice several years ago and the cannula used by my mother on the morning of her recent death 8.8.19. ... A safe place for these things to reside and remain to be protected." (Jones) (This was the second brother to predecease Jones.)

In realizing that she was making a place of protection, Jones chose the title *Cradle: Last Sound, Last Breath*. It was only later in her research that she discovered that the use of blue pigment in the ancient Egyptian tombs of the Pharaohs was also meant for protection. She considered that discovery a kind of confirmation.

Jones' active dream life is particularly evident in the paintings and manipulated photographs from the early '90s through the late 2000s. Titles often use the word dream. Though abstract, the imagery appears surreal in the use of dramatic and unpredictable light sources, gravity-defying rock forms, and undefined scale relationships. Here we also find the somewhat abstracted but readably wrapped, supine body in *Dreaming Rock with Figure Dreaming*, a large-scale 70" x 56" oil from 1993. I am reminded of the comings and goings in life. We both swaddle the infant and wrap the dead. Family is present in many of these abstractions. One can imagine in the 2003 painting titled *Cody x Clark*, the names of her two young sons, that she is "thinking," or feeling into, a kind of protection. The gestural, circular form delineates a space that could be interpreted, because of the title, as a bodily reference to the womb or a desire to embrace. Again, the abstracted cocoon forms appear wrapped. You can see the repeated circular gesture throughout many of these paintings, as well as throughout *The Decay Series* with their abstracted versions of fungi and trees. Some of these walk the boundary between two-dimensional representation alongside three-dimensional objects. Sometimes the gesture remains a circle, other times it is filled in, becoming the solid dreaming rock forms, and sometimes those rocks fracture, or individuate, yet hold together, as in the painting *Mark x Linda* (her husband). We find bodily reminders in the paintings' dimensions as well. She uses the dimension of her husband and herself as the height and width of the canvas. Again, she does this with the painting titled *Cody x Clark*. In the 2007 painting *Rock Ring with Stitches*, Jones manipulates a photograph with encaustic, paint and, drawing mediums. The photo was of an ancient Inuit site from the Thelon River in the Northwest

Territories taken by her husband on a canoe trip. Once again, she is grappling with the notion of traces, of what gets left behind, here a domestic moment of an ancient culture.

The arc of Jones' work in this selected retrospective reveals her vast interiority, which, again, is full of awareness of life's fragile balance. Jones talks about being influenced by the German artist Joseph Beuys' notion of the artist as shaman. In Beuys' Guggenheim exhibition of 1979 he tells the invented story of being nursed back to health by a band of Tartars when shot down in WWII at the Crimean Front (the latter part being true). He tells of being wrapped in fat and felt, and fed warm milk to bring his cold body back to life, and thus the use of fat, felt, and milk throughout many of the objects in the exhibition.

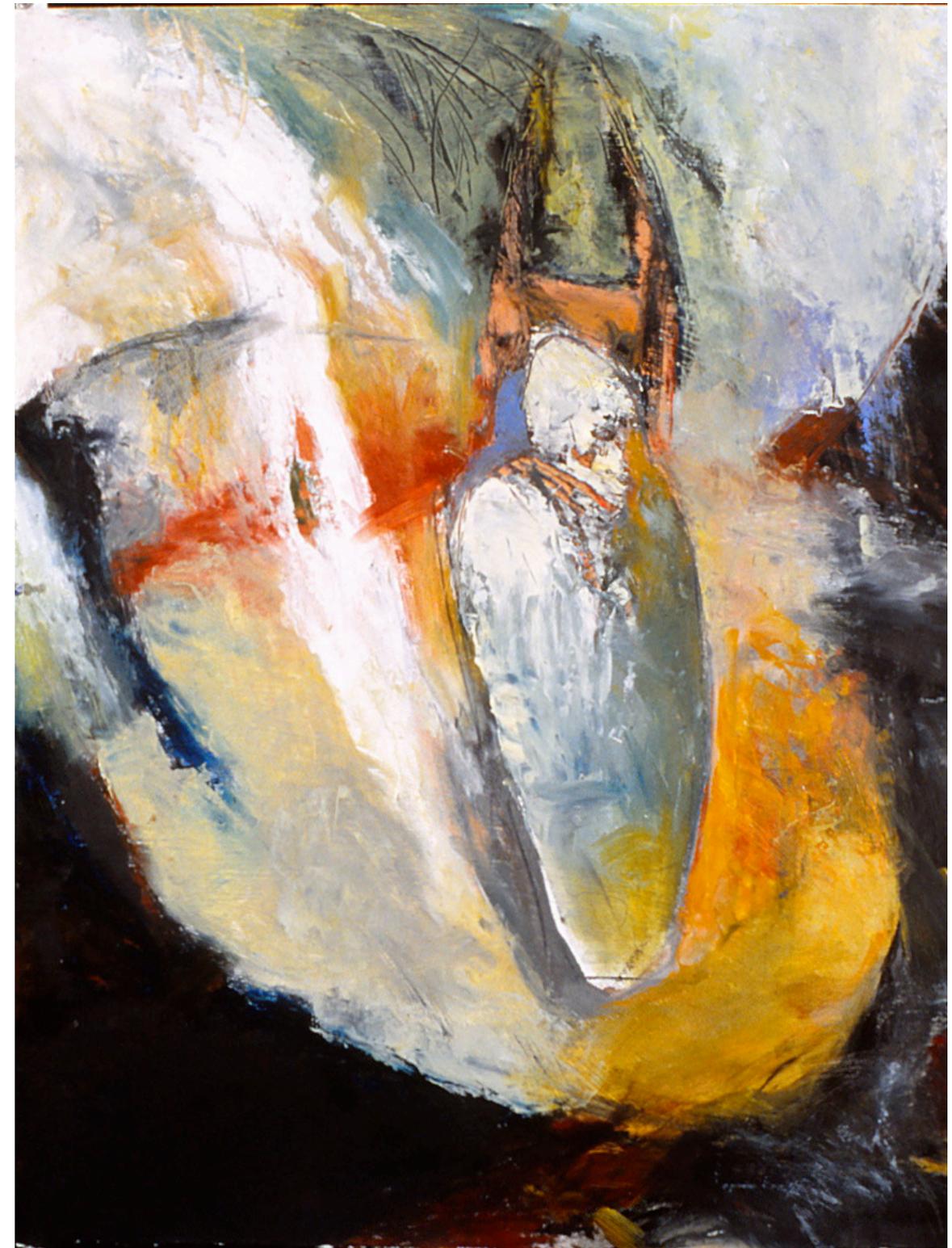
Like Beuys, Jones' art becomes both artifact of her personal story and imaginal enough to prompt the viewers to form their own narratives. Like Beuys, Jones' sense of loss and living are simultaneously transcendent and sensuous. Grief is an embodied event. We feel loss in our hearts, our guts, our collapsing limbs from shocking news. In the case of the triptych *Portal* we see a dynamic hovering between the physical and metaphysical. In the left panel is an abstract photo taken when spreading the ashes of her brother Pete into the waters off of Block Island. Jones tells the story that the ashes appeared to reform instead of disperse. The image of an almost skeletal form in the lower left-hand corner is proof. It is as if there was a morphic resonance (Sheldrake) and desire amongst the particulates to reunify. When talking about the work, she shares that the family was shocked. What they witnessed defied logic. The center panel is a doorway based upon a dream where Jones, unafraid, crosses the liminal threshold from life to beyond life, by surrendering to a backwards fall through a portal. The final panel hints of the water's edge of this shared childhood place as the ashes stirred by the current are eventually laid to rest.

As a viewer I am struck by wider frameworks when considering Jones' work. After all, we always participate through our own lens. Though the context for Jones' work is very personal, it animates our own existential pondering, further amplified by age as one's own mortality grows nearer. Yet, there is even a wider take we can explore when viewing her work, and that is the resonance between the mysteries of our own human mortality with the ubiquitous endings confronting us all as we live in the midst of our current ecological and geopolitical unravelings. Jones brings her own emotional insistence and rigor to loving it all: children, partners, parents, siblings, and places. You should see her gardens! With Jones' particular shamanic tenor, we are invited to look unflinchingly at our own grief, human and otherwise, while seeking deeply our own sources of resilience, maybe even guidance, as we attend to what is precious.

¹. JONES, LINDA E., STUDIO NOTES AND CONVERSATIONS

². RUPERT SHELDRAKE [HTTPS://WWW.SHELDRAKE.ORG/RESEARCH/MORPHIC-RESONANCE](https://www.sheldrake.org/research/morphic-resonance)

RIGHT
Transcending figure Oil, 36" x 30", oilstick and mixed media on paper, 1992



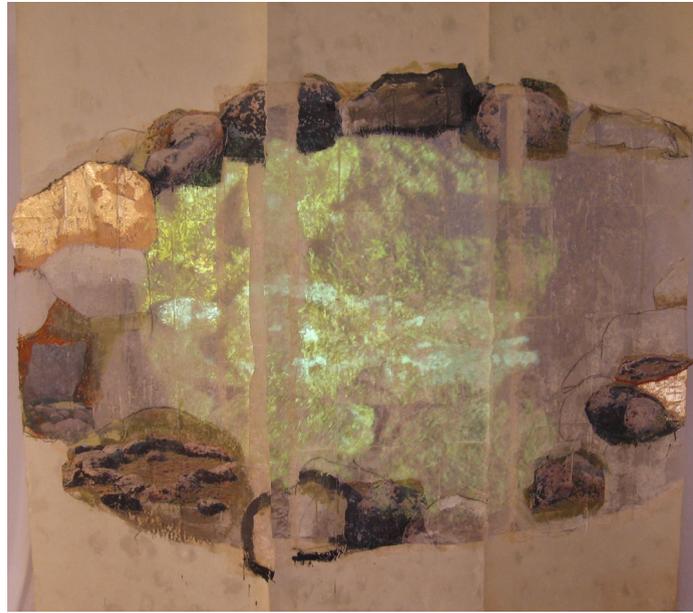


hi gja '07

LEFT *Lucky Stone with Burial Cairn* 32" x 44" encaustic and mixed media on digital print, 2007



RIGHT *Rock Ring with Stitches*,
32" x 44" Encaustic and mixed media on
digital print, 2007



TOP *Traces of Life/Rock Ring*, 9' x 10'
Encaustic on nepali and rives BFK
paper with gold leaf and digital print
and projection, 2007

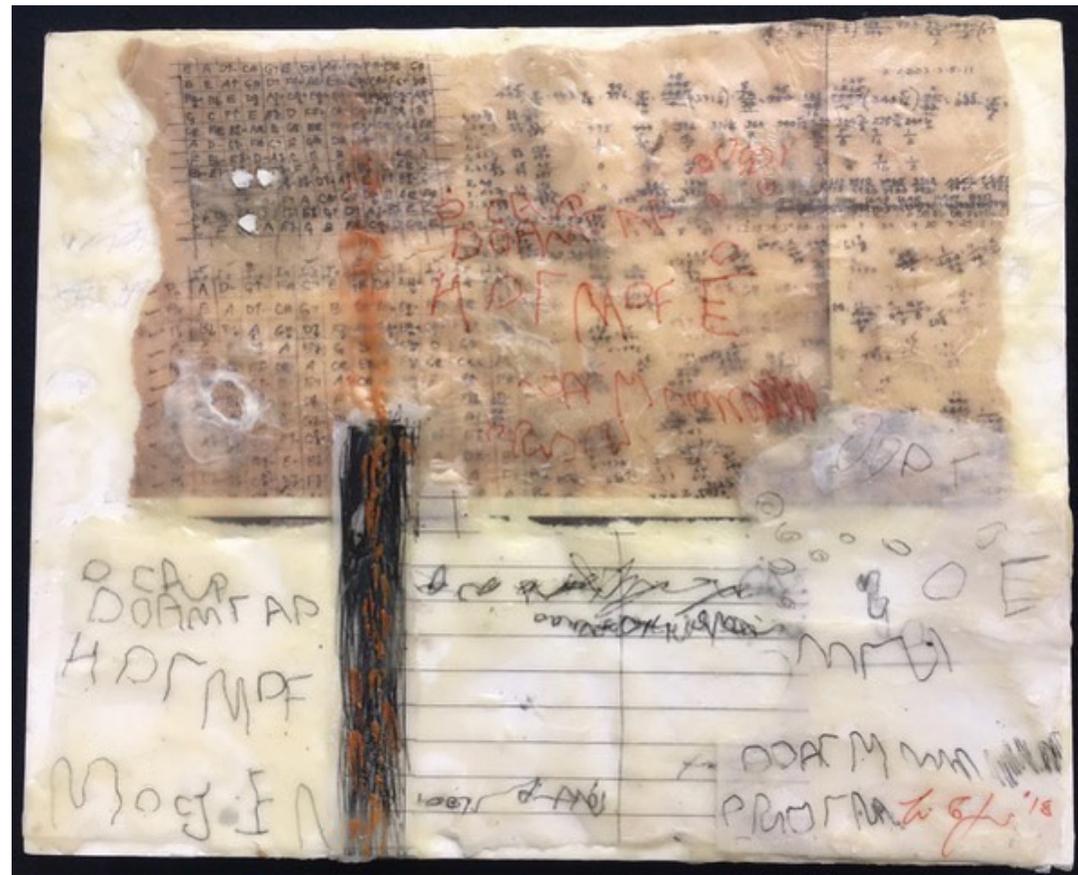


BOTTOM *Standing Stones with Twigs*,
32" x 44" encaustic and mixed media
on digital print, 2007

RIGHT *Old Injury*, 36" x 30" Oil and
mixed media on canvas, 2003

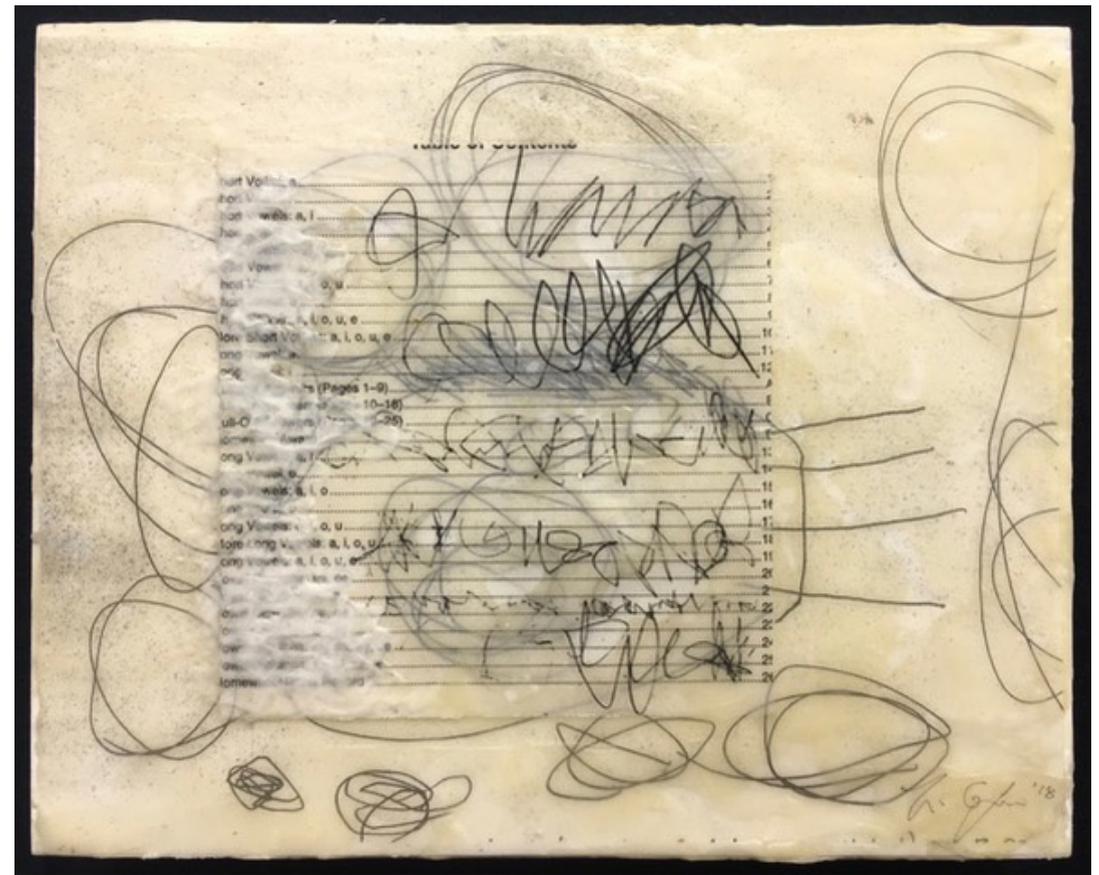


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ABOVE Emergence-Cracking the Code, 7" x 6", Encaustic, graphite, rice papers, oil and mixed media on wood panel, 2015

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ABOVE Emergent Writing with Vowels and Puella, 6" x 7" Encaustic and mixed media on wood panel, 2015



RIGHT *Sand & Time Markings*, 48" x 62"
Oil and mixed media on canvas, 20xx

“I am working with observational photographs that are manipulated digitally, then reworked with scratching and encaustic methods.”



RIGHT Image from *Traces*, 7'x 7' total, Wall Installation, 2019



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LEFT *Form(ed) with Dream*, 54" x 60" Oil and mixed media on canvas, 1992

ABOVE LEFT *Cody X Clark*, 44" x 30" Oil, graphite and mixed media on canvas, 2003

ABOVE RIGHT *Mark X Cody*, 72" x 52" Oil and mixed media on canvas, 2003

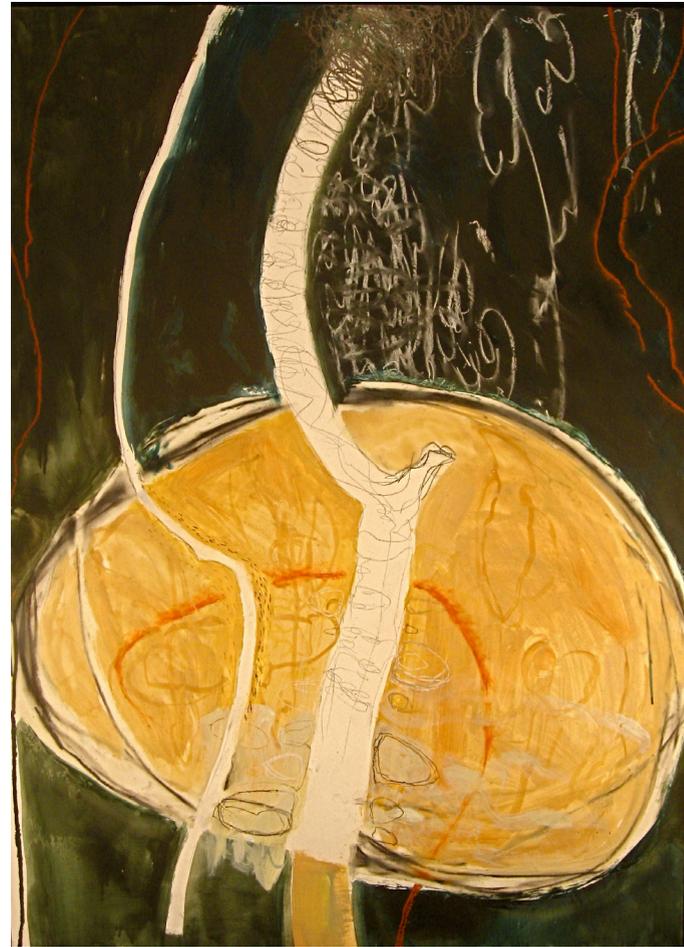
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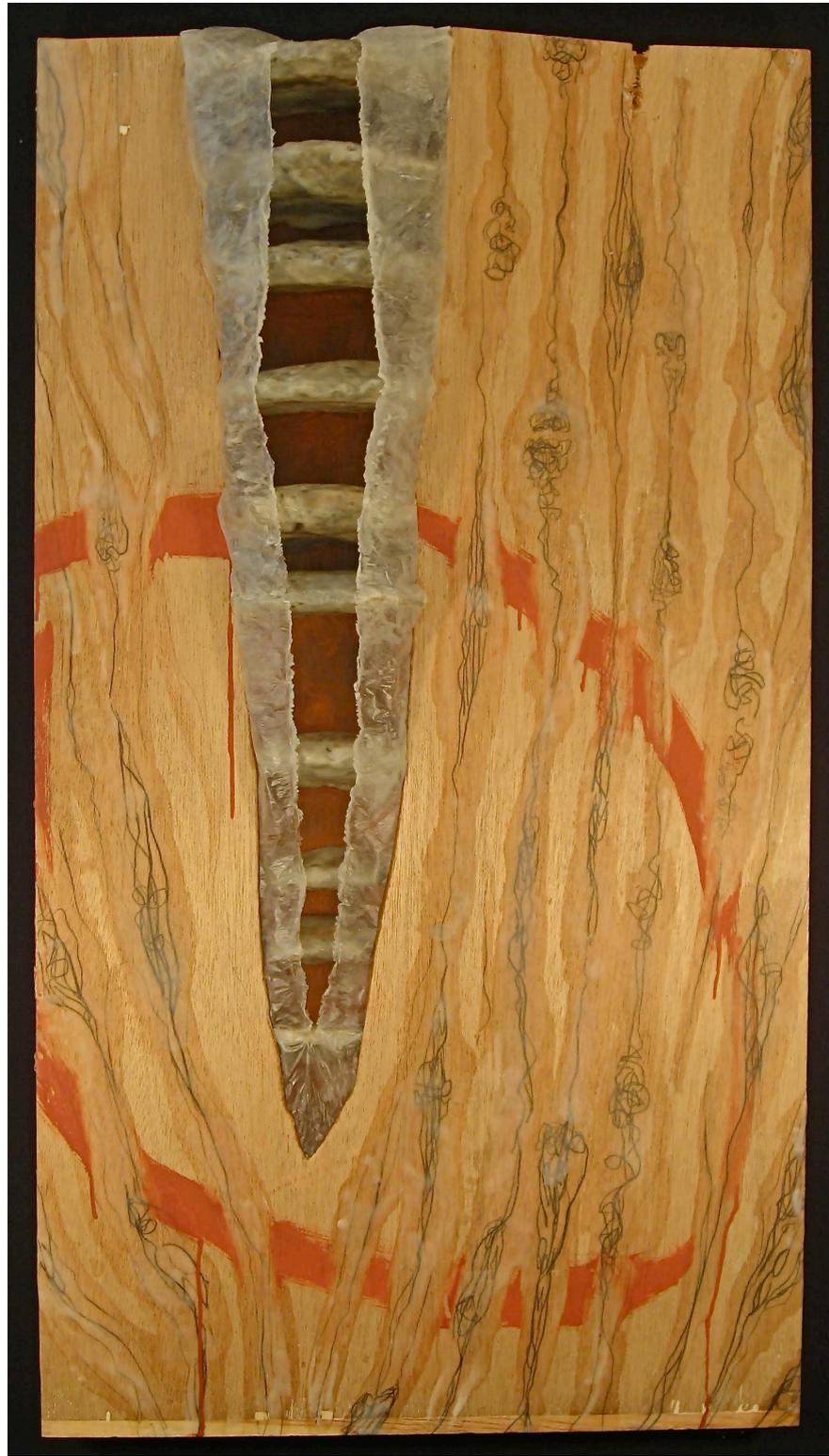
ABOVE LEFT From *The Decay Series*, *Decay III*, 41" x 15" Sticks, encaustic, graphite and chalk on wood panel, 2010

ABOVE RIGHT *Sticks*, 38" x 28" Oil, encaustic, graphite and chalk on wood panel, 2010

RIGHT *The Decay Series: Fungus Tree*, 39" x 32" Oil, encaustic, graphite and mixed media on wood panel, 2010



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“I work intuitively with the layers and colors in Photoshop, not unlike the way I work with my layers of encaustic, oil paint, and mixed media.”

LEFT *The Decay Series: From Decay I*, 41" x 23" insulation foam, rice paper, graphite and encaustic in/on wood panel, 2010

“While in Aswan I was exploring a Islamic cemetery. In the middle of this arid, monochromatic place I stumbled across a tomb. The interior was covered with the most intense blue pigment. It appeared to be part of an offering. The contrast of this intense blue against this pale ochre/red oxide landscape was riveting.”

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PREVIOUS PAGE, ABOVE AND RIGHT
Cradling: Last Sound, Last Breath, 7' x 9' installation with photographs, pigment, foam, texture, 2019





LEFT TOP *Traces of Sparky*, 17" x 22" photograph, 2019

LEFT BOTTOM *Traces of Dad*, 17" x 22" photograph, 2019

ABOVE *Traces*, 7' x 7' total, Wall Installation with photographs and wax, 2019



ABOVE *Portal*, 92.5" x 25.5" (triptych)
photographs, 2019



CHAMPLAIN COLLEGE ART GALLERY

Center for Communication &
Creative Media, 2nd Floor,
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The Champlain College Art Gallery supports innovative and experimental contemporary art in all media through exhibitions, events, projects, and residencies. The gallery is a catalyst for interdisciplinary collaboration and learning at the intersection of art and technology. It features the work of national and regional, as well as faculty and student, artists confronting cultural and artistic issues.

**champlain.edu/artgallery
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