



Joshua Meyer, "Absences," 2013, oil on canvas, 40 x 60 in. Dolby Chadwick Gallery

## Joshua Meyer: Exploring with Paint

**Talented and thoughtful artist Joshua Meyer offers his unique perspective on painting, what it should do, and how to give it life.**

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How does one describe Joshua Meyer's painterly creations? They are visionary, impressionistic, fractured, challenging, and — almost impossibly — cohesive. Though extraordinary products, they are the result of a surprisingly traditional process.

Like most portrait artists, Meyer begins his process in the studio with a model. Each of Meyer's heavily worked canvases is painted from life. A rotating group of very accommodating friends and family sit for the artist, whose compositions take months, at a minimum, to complete. With his sitter before him, Meyer approaches every piece as a unique creation, allowing the painting to develop its

own direction and momentum. "I try not to have notions about a picture's endpoint, so the process is about searching and exploring with paint," Meyer explains.

From there, the painting unfolds as a struggle, on psychological and aesthetic levels. The artist employs an exceptionally broad

palette that creates room for dynamic and unexpected juxtapositions. "The colors and the painting should be hard to pin down, difficult to contain, so that they intimate energy and life," Meyer continues. "I try every color combination I can possibly imagine, one atop another. Each color leads to the next, or else it hides the previous color. I don't think color is about accuracy as much as it is about relationships. So every color I put into a picture pushes all of the other colors in new ways. Every mark I make forces the picture to recalibrate itself. This keeps the painting alive—keeps it rustling and sparkling."

Painting has an evident weightiness for Meyer, who describes art-making as "both the act that makes me look deep within as well as the way that I connect with things greater than myself." It is both painstaking labor and a joyous love. His paintings eloquently express the beauty that exists in cohesion among disparate parts. They bring together a group of colors and marks that seem unconnected or disjointed, but, ultimately, combine to form an arresting and beautiful image.



Joshua Meyer, "Silencing Stories," 2013, oil on canvas, 32 x 28 in. Dolby Chadwick Gallery



Joshua Meyer, "Wingspan," 2013, oil on canvas, 46 x 120 in. Dolby Chadwick Gallery

Meyer's careful and belabored working process also engenders paintings with inherent contradictions. His artworks are the end results of a long process; as such, they crystallize different moments from the artist's life and various attitudes toward his creation.

"Essentially I am a seeker," explains Meyer. "I go into the studio each day in the hope of finding something of value. Something true or revealing, surprising, funny, sad. Something that expands the way I see the world. Most days this goal seems impossible, but I try anyway, sometimes desperately. The paintings take months at a minimum and sometimes much longer to finish. So in the end they contain all of these false starts. They accumulate all of the directions that the model and I travelled. So they have a little bit of fun in them, a little bit of clever, a little bit of anger and frustration, a little boredom, some deep thoughts and also some joy."

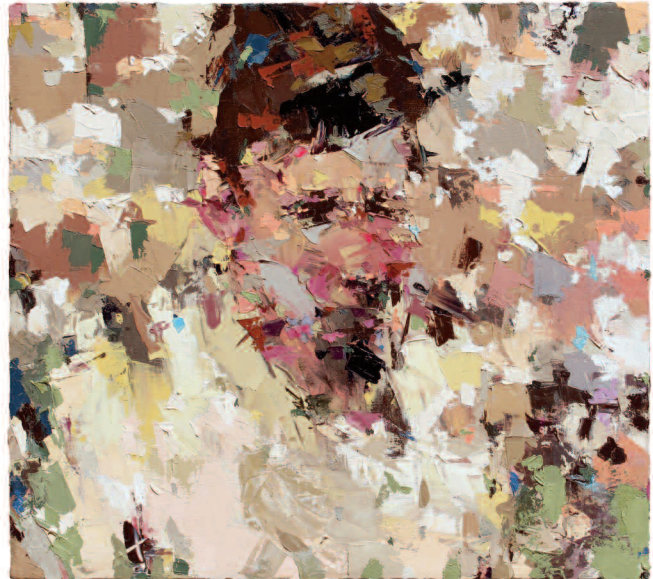
In planning his upcoming solo exhibition at Dolby Chadwick Gallery in San Francisco, Meyer assigned a title to the show that mirrors the poetical undercurrent to his paintings: "Rustle, Sparkle, Flutter, Float."

"The line comes from a poem by Wislawa Szymborska, whose words are always remarkably beautiful," says Meyer. "She describes what art ought to do. And isn't it a great checklist? Before I send a painting out of the studio and into the world I need to verify: Does it rustle? Does it sparkle? Does it flutter? And of course, is it magical enough—does it float?"

Without a doubt, the recent paintings are imaginative, vulnerable, visually compelling, and powerfully expressive. But what lies

ahead for this devoted painter? That remains to be seen.

"For this current show, the Dolby Chadwick Gallery put together a book," Meyer begins. "They asked me if I wanted to include a little bit of older work in the book to give a broader context for what I am making and

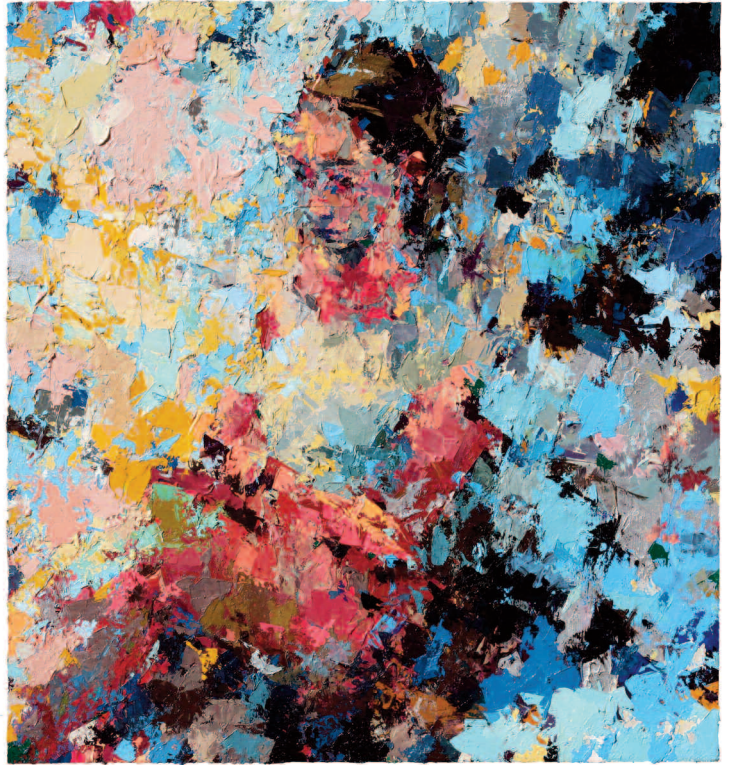


Joshua Meyer, "Bits and Pieces," 2013, oil on canvas, 18 x 20 in.  
Dolby Chadwick Gallery



Joshua Meyer, "Undergrowth," 2013, oil on canvas, 36 x 36 in.  
Dolby Chadwick Gallery

presenting. Looking back on older work, I was pretty shocked at how dramatically some older paintings differ from what I am making now. For me as the artist it is all one continuous stream, one painting after another. I haven't wiped the slate clean, so to speak, in many, many years. And yet the work continues to change because I continue to change. I do not ever plan it that way. I just go into the studio each day and dig as deeply as I am able. I could never make those paintings again because I am no longer the artist I was then. I see things differently now. I have read new books, met new friends, my relationships have deepened and broadened. To say how my work will develop would be to predict how my life will develop. There is joy in knowing that it will, but not knowing how! Meanwhile, I continue to paint and explore."



Joshua Meyer, "Slower, Louder, Breathe," 2013, oil on canvas, 30 x 28 in.  
Dolby Chadwick Gallery