

LandEscape meets

M Eugene

One of my greatest joys in painting is exploring the endless possibilities available with each canvas, and allowing myself to flow freely with, or away from, my initial vision. My artwork is largely driven by emotion. Which, in turn, is driven heavily by my introspective tendencies, my visceral appreciation of music, as well as the vast complexity of the nature and space that surrounds each of us.

M Eugene

An interview by **Josh Ryder**, curator
and **Melissa C. Hilborn**, curator
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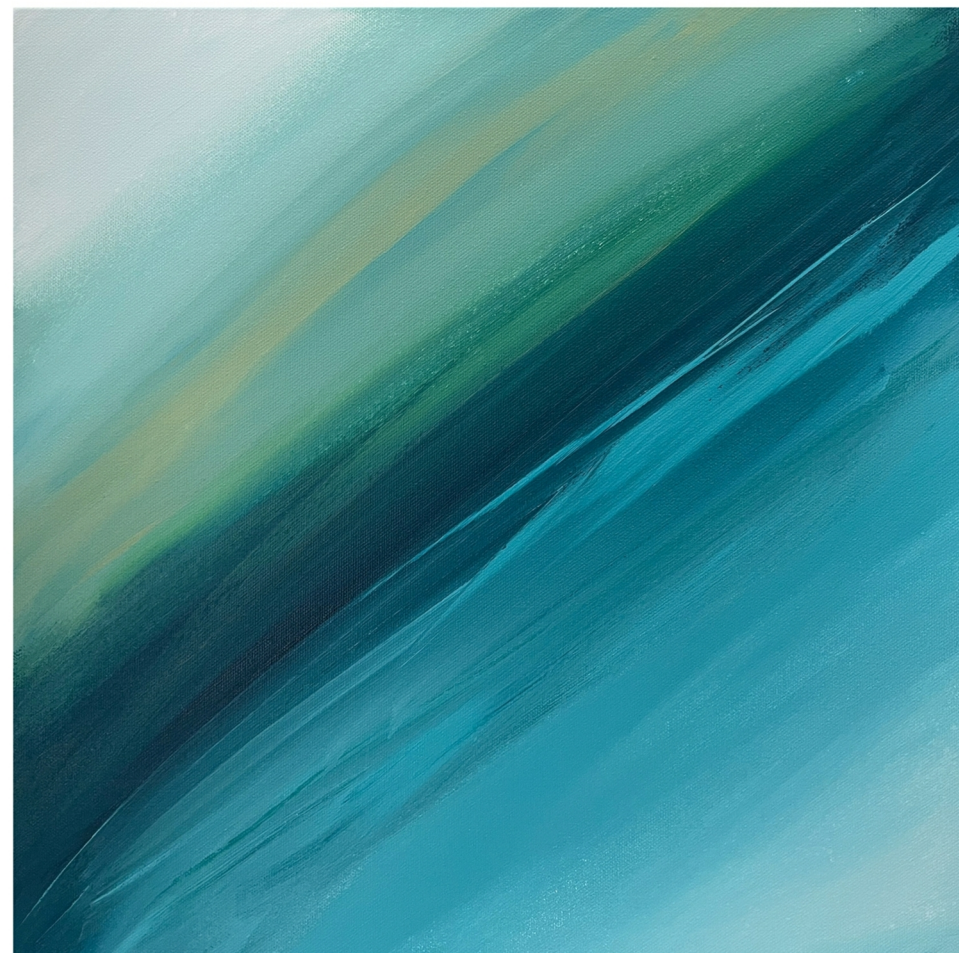
Hello M Eugene and welcome to LandEscape. Before starting to elaborate about your artistic production and we would like to invite our readers to visit <https://www.meugeneart.com> in order to get a wide idea about your artistic production, and we would start this interview with a couple of questions about your background: are there any particular experiences that did particularly influence your evolution as an artist? Moreover, how

does your cultural substratum address the direction of your current artistic research?

M Eugene: My grandmother is a self-taught artist, and some of my earliest memories are from watching her draw and paint, as well as looking through all of her artistic books with instructions on how to draw more realistically.

She also taught art, and allowed me to tag along with her, which gave me an immense amount of additional training in my childhood drawings, more so than what a typical child might.





Serenity So Fleeting

As someone working almost exclusively with the elderly population as a physical therapist, I spend a great deal of time

contemplating the arc of life. I've had hundreds of patients confide in my their stories, and we all share so many



Thistle

common paths filled with periods of triumph, despair, pride and regret. If nothing else, I've gained a greater sense

of appreciation for the world around me. I won't claim to never take something for granted, but I'm always working to



Rebirth

appreciate the moment and that's where I try to operate when I'm painting...in the flow of the moment.

The body of works that we have selected for this special edition of LandEscape has at once impressed us for the way you



Stronger Together, Torn Apart

naturalistic exploration of the aesthetics of environment, as well as your unique use of landscape as a means of exploring the

complexity of human emotions: when walking our readers through your usual setup and process, would you tell us how



Flooded In Light



Let Go From Above

M Eugene



Efflorescent

do you usually develop the initial ideas for your artworks?

M Eugene: I am heavily influenced by my

deep appreciation for nature. If observed closely, the most beautiful colors and sounds can be seen all around us. Most typically, as I visualize the direction that I



Cone Flower

M Eugene

would like to take with a painting I begin with the colors and sensations experienced while out hiking, or simply sitting to observe. For me, it's impossible not to become lost in contemplation at the immensity of the world around us, and our relative insignificance.

As you have remarked in your artist's statement, one of your greatest joys in painting is exploring the endless possibilities available with each canvas, and allowing myself to flow freely with, or away from, your initial vision: how do you consider the role of intuition and improvisation playing within your artistic process? Do you create your works intuitively, instinctively? Or do you methodically transpose geometric schemes?

M Eugene: While I do often have a rough idea of how I want a piece to eventually look, I prefer to allow fluidity in the realization of the final product. To achieve this flow, I enjoy losing myself in some of my favorite musical artists throughout the painting process. This helps me to disconnect my typically analytical mind, opening myself up to explore new avenues as they present themselves with each painting. To this same degree, I have also become aware of how attached I am to nature while painting, as changes in lighting, temperature, a breeze, etc can



Midnight Blossom



Return to Hana

alter the course of my painting. Therefore, I do at times actively seek out specific periods of time to begin certain paintings.

Largely driven by emotion, your work is also deeply inspired by the vast complexity of the nature and space that surrounds each of us: how does your everyday life's experience fuel your artistic research?

If given time to truly appreciate the details all around us, there is a lot of beauty to explore, and to enjoy. These two pieces are special to me as they allowed me to explore bold texture and color in much the same way that I find myself exploring mother nature itself.

The unique abstract feature that marks out your artistic production artistic practice — and more specifically the interesting Rebirth and Afterglow — seems to invite the viewers to look inside of what appear to be seen, rather than its surface: how important is for you to trigger the viewers' imagination in order to address them to elaborate personal interpretations? In particular, how open would you like your works to be understood?

M Eugene: In these particular pieces I did choose to utilize varying textures and tones between the foreground and background to highlight the disparity that can be found between the inner-self and the outward

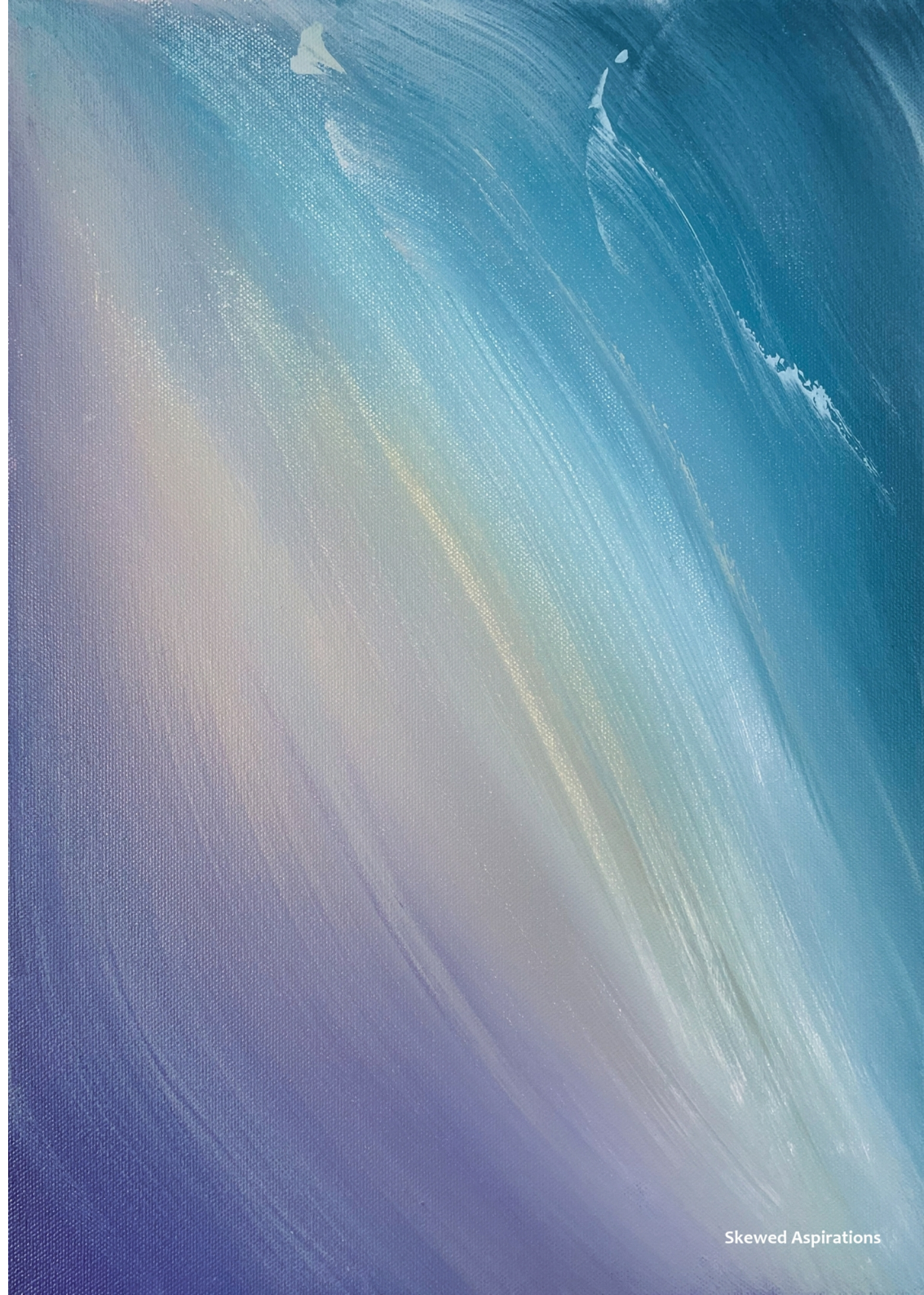




Bittersweet Blossoms

appearance. This same relationship can be observed in nature when considering the sense of calm that can accompany a spring storm. While I am always excited

to hear that my desired tone has been communicated successfully to the viewer, I am equally as happy to learn of alternate interpretations as I appreciate



Skewed Aspirations



The Fire Within

that we all live unique lives with unique perspectives developed through our own individual set of circumstances.

We have appreciated the variety of your palette, that ranges from delicate and thoughtful nuances as in Skewed Aspirations to such intense, almost bold colors, as in Let Go From Above. How does your own psychological make-up determine the nuances of tones that you decide to include in an artwork and in particular, how do you develop your textures in order to achieve such unique results?

M Eugene: I appreciate this question so much, as texture is such a large part of how I explore each piece. As my pieces are so affected by my mood on the specific day of it's painting, it is fair to say that there is certainly a correlation between my chosen color scheme and/or texture at that specific time. It is also fun to explore how each can portray varying emotions in the piece itself, which is a skill I continue to refine. As such, I am constantly experimenting with new techniques for brush work and with palette knives to gain a dynamic balance between soft and bold colors and textures.

We have appreciated the way you combine slight reminders to reality — as in the interesting Return to Hana and Midnight Blossom — with such unique dreamlike visual qualities. Scottish visual artist Peter Doig once remarked that even the most realistic works of art are derived more from within the head than from what's out there in front of us: how do you consider the relationship between reality and imagination, playing within your artistic production?

M Eugene: I am of the belief that we may all interpret the same visual imagery uniquely. Whether it be the coloration, the dimensions, the emotion, or any number of inputs. Where I specifically land on that scale of interpretation falls mostly along the emotional plane.

You have a visceral appreciation of music: how do you see the relationship between music and visual arts?

M Eugene: There is a large body of evidence, look no further than the movies, to indicate that music can be utilized very successfully to elicit a desired emotion. As such, I enjoy harnessing my favorite artists work to drive me further into an exploration of a particular emotion.

It's important to remark that in addition to your work as an artist, you are also a Physical Therapist, working in the home health setting, and that providing care and exploring opportunities to improve the quality of life of our elderly population, has been one of the most fulfilling aspects of your life: do you think that art making could be considered a special kind of therapy, that may help both the artist and the viewers to heal their inner wounds?

M Eugene: Absolutely. For me, painting began only as an emotional sort of therapy, with no intention of exploring it any further than as a stress relieving hobby. I have always personally enjoyed exploring art museums and losing myself in the pieces before me...I imagine, for the same purpose.

How do you consider the nature of your relationship with your audience? By the way, as the move of Art from traditional gallery spaces — to street and especially to online platforms as Instagram — increases, how would in your opinion change the relationship with a globalised audience?

M Eugene: I think this is an exciting time to be an artist. Of course, interacting in-person with a collector or curator is wonderful and will continue to be so, but the growth in online platforms and online

galleries has opened up each artists work to such a wide array of viewers. That is why I have setup my own online gallery at meugeneart.com, and post my latest work on Instagram at [meugene_art](https://www.instagram.com/meugene_art) (https://www.instagram.com/meugene_art)

We have really appreciated the multifaceted nature of your artistic research and before leaving this stimulating conversation we would like to thank you for chatting with us and for sharing your thoughts, M Eugene. What projects are you currently working on, and what are some of the ideas that you hope to explore in the future?

M Eugene: Thank you, I have really enjoyed this experience. With spring emerging, I have been exploring the exuberance and energy that comes with this time of year. I've recently been interested in botanical subjects but also plan to continue along the same vein as *Return to Hana* and *Rebirth*.

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M Eugene
Fallacy of Perfection