



Entwined Roots: Symbiotic Relationships

Gary Brewer & Aline Mare

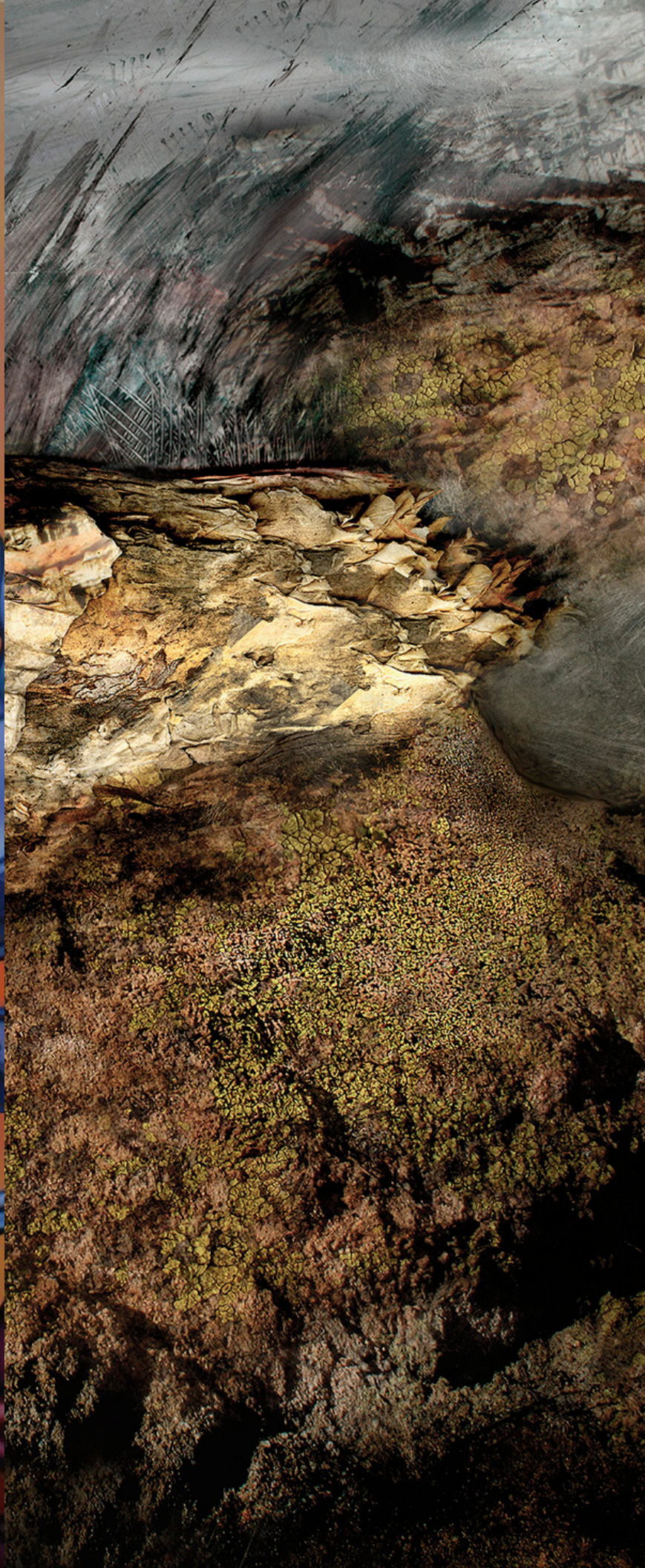


Entwined Roots: Symbiotic Relationships

Gary Brewer and Aline Mare

Fatemeh Burnes, curator
Humberto Reynosa, exhibition design

DIANA BERGER ART GALLERY • MT SAN ANTONIO COLLEGE



ESSAY BY

Constance Mallinson

Entwined Roots, Symbiotic Relationships

THE ART OF GARY BREWER AND ALINE MARE

Prior to the last fifty years women artists were recognized solely as invisible muses largely subservient to male artists. A Darwinian triumph was essential to drive the tenets of artistic progress and success essential to its marketing. The mutual exchange of ideas, approaches and aesthetics was incompatible with that model. No longer able to withstand its contestable past, that paradigm has now collapsed with countless contemporary biographies now extolling the comparable geniuses in artist couples. The biographies of Dorothy Tanning and Max Ernst, Jackson Pollack and Lee Krasner, Willem deKooning and Elaine DeKooning, Helen Frankenthaler and Robert Motherwell, Carl Andre and Anna Mendieta, to name a few, have been revised to reflect this equality and illuminate similarities and differences in their practices.

As part of this still unfolding narrative artists Gary Brewer and Aline Mare have been acknowledged for their distinctive but intimately related artworks created during their supportive 25 year relationship. They met in New York through an introduction by performance artist Carolee Schneemann at an art party. Aline was a performance/video artist from New York living in San Francisco, and Gary had come to New York seeking community as a reductive abstract painter. Increasingly dissatisfied and “disconnected with the excess” of 70’s and 80’s video performance culture and similarly driven by Brewer’s curiosity and enthusiasm for nature, literature, film and art, Mare began exploring “a quieter” painting and object making while Brewer’s work morphed from reductivism to incorporating imagery. After several years spent in the Bay Area

Gary Brewer

Metamorphic Fire

84”x30”

Oil on canvas

2018

Aline Mare

Stormy Weather

24”x36”

Painted metal

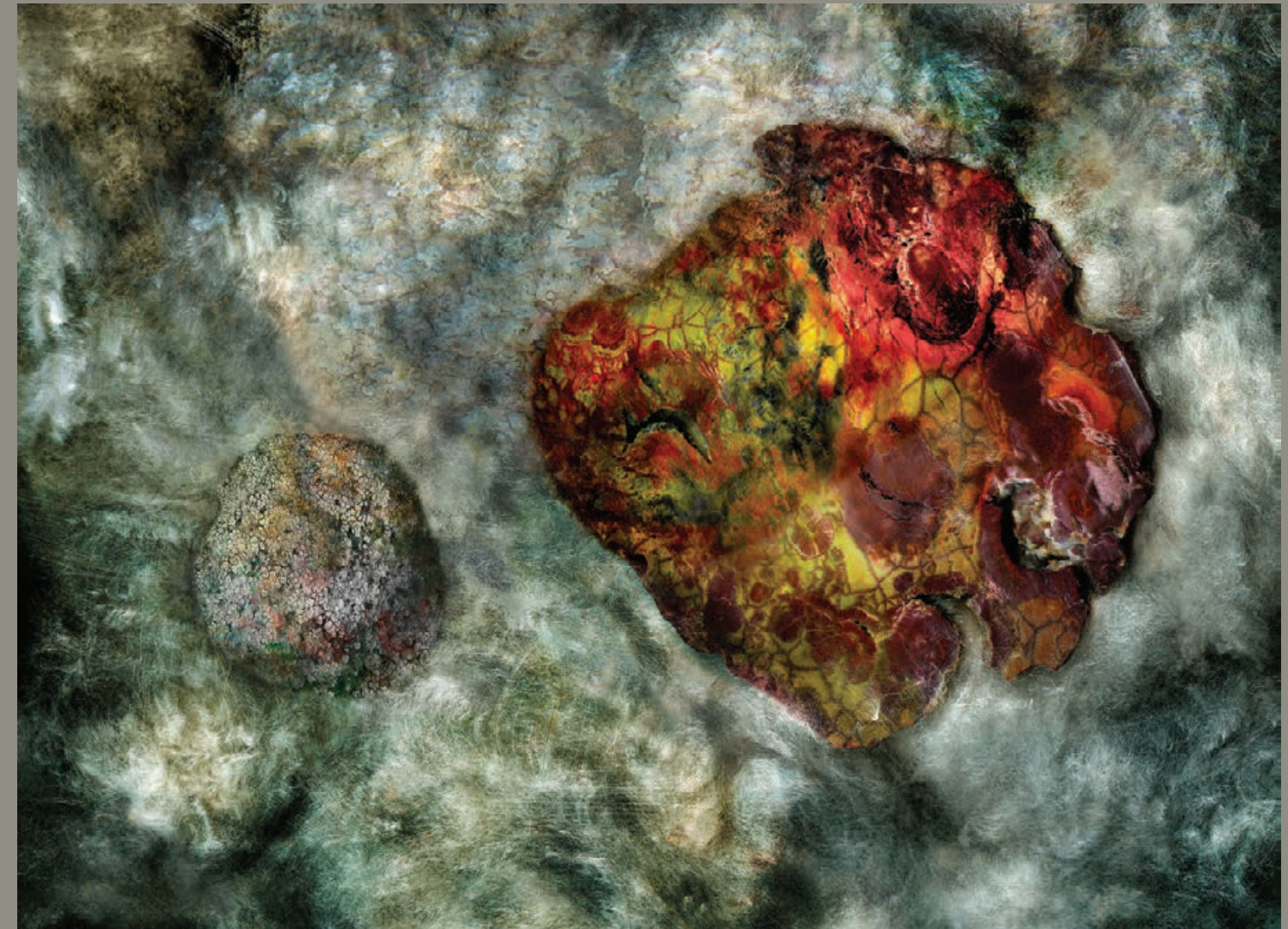
2019



Gary Brewer
The Emergence of Form
40"×30"
Oil on canvas
2017

together where they could backpack in the redwoods and indulge their passion for nature, they settled in Los Angeles in 2013, completing their mature bodies of work (2015–2020) featured in this survey exhibition. There are many crosscurrents and intersections in their practices, most notably in their marriage of romanticism and science: nature imagery is ubiquitous but always immersed in lush atmospheric fields of pigment, whether in Brewer's pristinely rendered organic forms or in Mare's photographically reproduced and hand colored natural detritus; digital imagery from NASA files is an important reference for Brewer's painted abstractions derived from dark matter computer animations as it is for Mare who weaves outer space photography and images of natural disasters taken from satellites and diverse photographs into her hybrids of photography and painting. Such compositions point to the synchronism of the macrocosm with diverse microcosms and the two artists' deep contemplation of the dimensions of human existence. An erotics of painting permeates both their work: the pleasures of sheer beauty expressed in seductive veils of rich color, sensuous lines and organic forms infused with sexual and procreative innuendo. Their unapologetic embrace of beauty in the face of cultural cynicism and sublime threats of annihilation indicates the divine power of Venus and Mars are in constant play.

Several works from Mare's 2018 book *Requiem: Aching for Acker* serve as elegies to her friend the poet Kathy Acker who died of cancer in 1997. Mare's perfected technique of synthesizing digital scanning processes and hand painting allowed for visceral photo images such as hearts, fleshy torsos and limbs, skeletal forms, cellular shapes to be suffused with painterly evocations of blood, rot, surgery, and decay. These are deftly intermingled with artifacts and textual fragments from Acker's life and poems. As if acknowledging its insufficiencies and inadequacies to fully express and comprehend momentous life events, Mare seems to regard the photograph as



Aline Mare
Fossilized Liver (from the book Requiem: Aching for Acker)
24"×30"
Painted metal
2018



Aline Mare

Pod cloud 3 Seeds
?"x?"
Medium?
date?

merely the objective ground or material aspect of existence in need of subjective augmentation. A melding of phenomenology with ontology, such approaches are described by art historian Simon Schama as an "excavation below our conventional sight level to recover the veins of myth and memory that lie beneath the surface." Moreover the technical reproducibility of photography and its "loss of aura" as described by Walter Benjamin, is subverted, its aura as a unique artwork regained by her personal mark making and layered paint strokes. When infiltrated with smokey translucent mists, textural marks, and vaporous spectral forms, the experience is heightened dramatically to suggest powerful raw emotions, memories, hints at ethereality and transcendence, the mystical and magical. Rather than gloomy or melancholic, these works exist in the gaps between disappearance and rebirth, the tone instead celebratory. They are nothing short of visionary in their reach.

Similarly, more recent works created with dye infused metal from the *Angle of Repose Series* (2017) and the ongoing *Cloud Seeds Series* continue this inquiry. Here the current state of the natural world is the primary focus. Imagery of seed pods, flowers, fungi, tangled roots, branches, fossils, and soft clouds of twig flecked kapok (a cotton like substance from the kapok tree) is suspended within multi-dimensional atmospheric spaces referencing skies, land, water or extreme weather patterns. Transparent abstract painted passages intermingle with detailed depictions of natural detritus to lessen the totalizing effects of illusion. Delicate filaments emanating from the



Charles Burchfield

Dandelion Seed Heads and the Moon
1961–65

organic materials simultaneously mimic microscopic forms as well as celestial bodies; these wispy threads seem to communicate between organisms like underground roots in tree communities. Dazzling cerulean skies, cadmium orange poppies, and magenta petals contrast with the rich umbers of soil and matted decaying plant material to suggest cycles of life and death. While such pairings can be read for allegorical or symbolic significance regarding cultural and environmental decline, they also are conveyed as creative, even fecund, a dynamic of change and renewal as opposed to dire warnings of collapse. Subtle scratches in the surfaces create an electrifying static charge or force fields throughout that align Mare with American painter Charles Burchfield's (1893–1967) near hallucinogenic, ravishing natural worlds buzzing with seen and unseen life forces. Like Burchfield, Mare weaves a grand narrative of connectedness, transforming the landscape into mysterious luminous realms where communion with nature, as the 19th century essayists Thoreau and Emerson believed, is the conduit to enlightened consciousness. Still other artworks in the exhibition use installation approaches to combine actual materials like salt crystals in combination with the photographs to conjoin the physical and spiritual and to signify the healing power of art. Assertively neo-Romantic in their yearnings, such intensified and highly aesthetic engagements with our natural surroundings awaken imaginative, critical strategies for preservation and the production of philosophical thought crucial to understanding contemporary existence.

Like Mare, Brewer draws profound metaphors concerning the coherence between the human and non-human world but purely through the paint medium. Growing up in Lancaster California as the son of a test pilot and engineer for the Apollo mission, his love of the outdoors was expanded by modern dreams of space travel, evidenced today in his meticulous botanical studies and their implied connections to the cosmos. Although he drew passionately in his youth, he came later to painting without the conventional art school training, perhaps accounting for his stated need to prove he could achieve perfection as a painter. Brewer's technical achievements are on full display in the exquisitely rendered, hyper-realist orchids, lichens, mosses, and glistening corals floating freely in radiant fields of prismatic color or set against net-like draped backdrops filled with irregular abstract shapes sourced from deep space Hubble telescope imagery. Manipulations in scale and enlargements to near cinematic proportions, vivid high contrast colorations and vast spatial references conjure 19th century landscapist

and painter of exotic flora and fauna Martin J. Heade meeting 20th century Minimalist Robert Irwin channeling Disney animation. As the Surrealists bent and shaped the recognizable into alternate realities—think Max Ernst’s alien landscapes and Dali’s warped objects—Brewer’s oversized florals and fungi can veer into anthropomorphic, supernatural or monstrous forms, beautiful and horrifying at once. Matter at its most infinitesimal, delicate, and wondrous coexists with the terrifyingly limitless and expanding universe, blending the traditional Kantian opposites of beauty and the sublime. Binaries dissolve as Brewer reveals the coincidences, infinite convergences and interdependencies circulating in the biosphere and the universe: the topography of a glistening coral fragment magnified hundreds of times is surprisingly similar to gas clouds billions of miles tall; gold nuggets resemble space matter; plants correspond to underwater animal life as well as galactic events; cellular structures with their swirling DNA helixes are duplicated throughout earth and beyond to link the origins of organic and inorganic life. Such synchronicities beg scientific examination but also spiritual and philosophical debates. We are reminded of the Sufi doctrine that to understand the cosmos will instantly lead to awareness of one’s condition. As ecological threats and a global environmental crisis give rise to dystopian fears, Modernist notions of progress are being revised to effect change. The invention of new aesthetic directions seems less critical to Brewer than revitalizing and engaging ancient and contemporary existential questions in order to shape and renew human experience.

In the most recent paintings (2018–2020) Brewer has eliminated identifiable imagery in favor of biomorphic abstractions composed of near phosphorescent, amoeba-like configurations based on NASA’s renditions of black holes and dark matter. The sensation is fluid and dreamy, alluding to altered states of mind. While his abstractions flirt with figuration, his use of sumptuous ultramarines, ambers viridians and violets is intuitive, emotive, and less dependent on accurate description than in earlier paintings. He attributes his vibrant color choices to a kind of synesthesia inspired by a wide range of music he listens to as he paints. However he has not abandoned his interest in exploring the cosmogenous mirroring of structural forms and the origins and boundaries of the human imagination. For Brewer, similarities in evolution seem mysteriously organized, perhaps according to the Gaia hypothesis of deep ecology as well as the laws of physics. Now that scientists have discovered electromagnetic relations exist between the brain and earth as a kind of planetary consciousness, Brewer’s conceptual model of the world unifying physical and spiritual dimensions pairs the poet with the scientist. Together with Mare, they propose a beautiful theory of everything.



Gary Brewer

Constellation
30"×30"
Oil on canvas
2018



Martin Johnson Heade

Orchid with Two Hummingbirds
1871

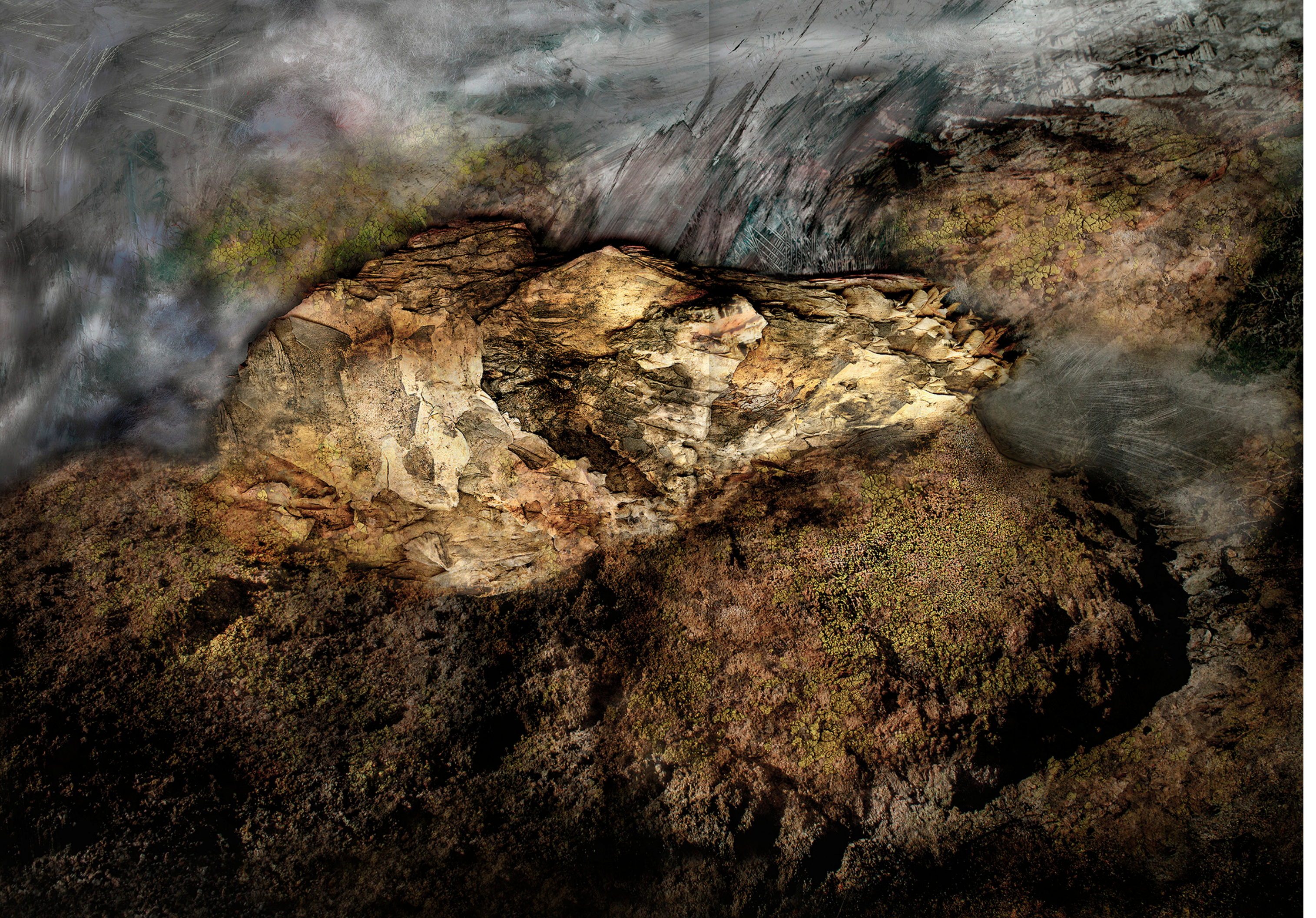


MicPink
24"×36"
Painted photo
2020



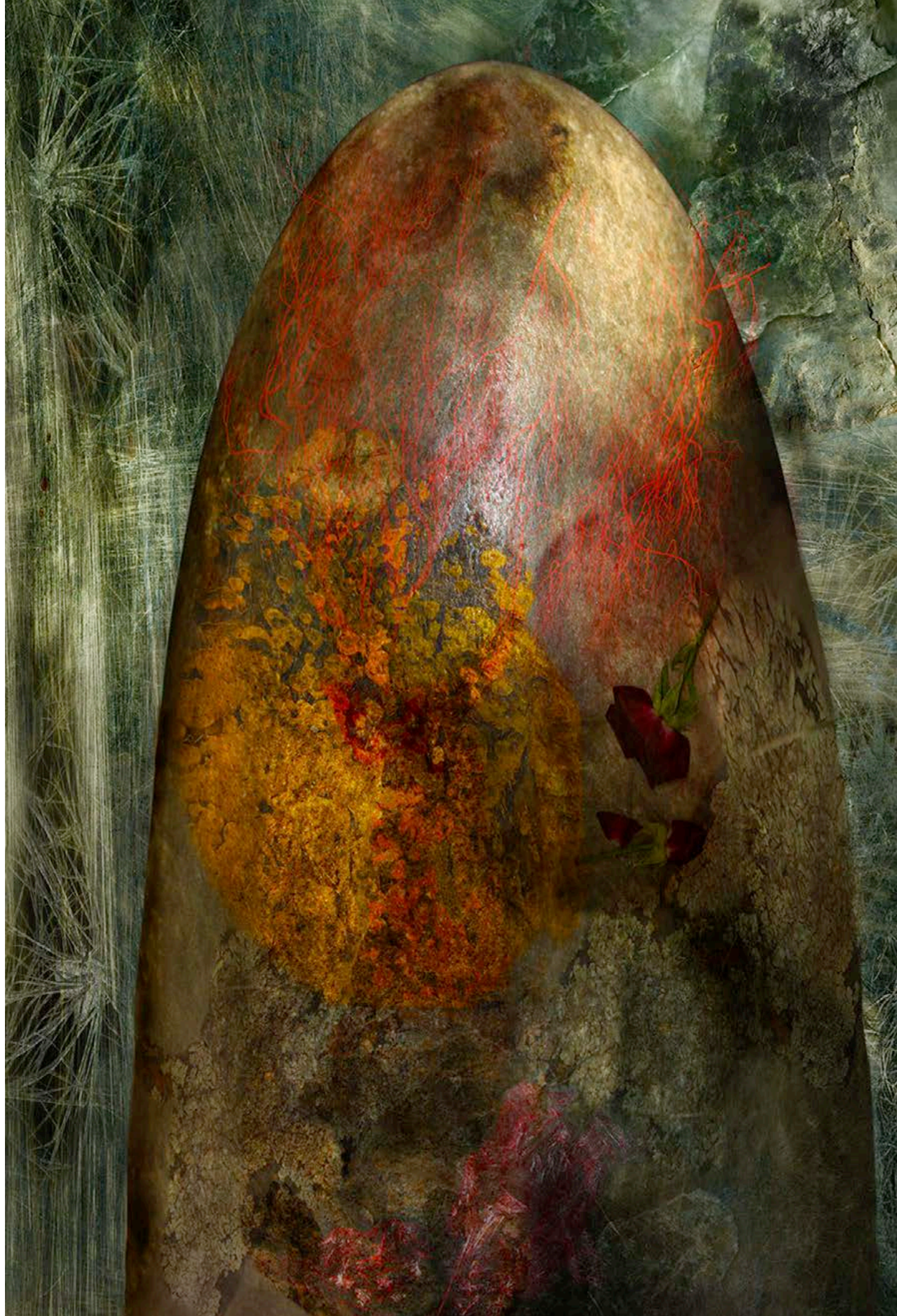
MicBlue
24"×36"
Painted paper
2020

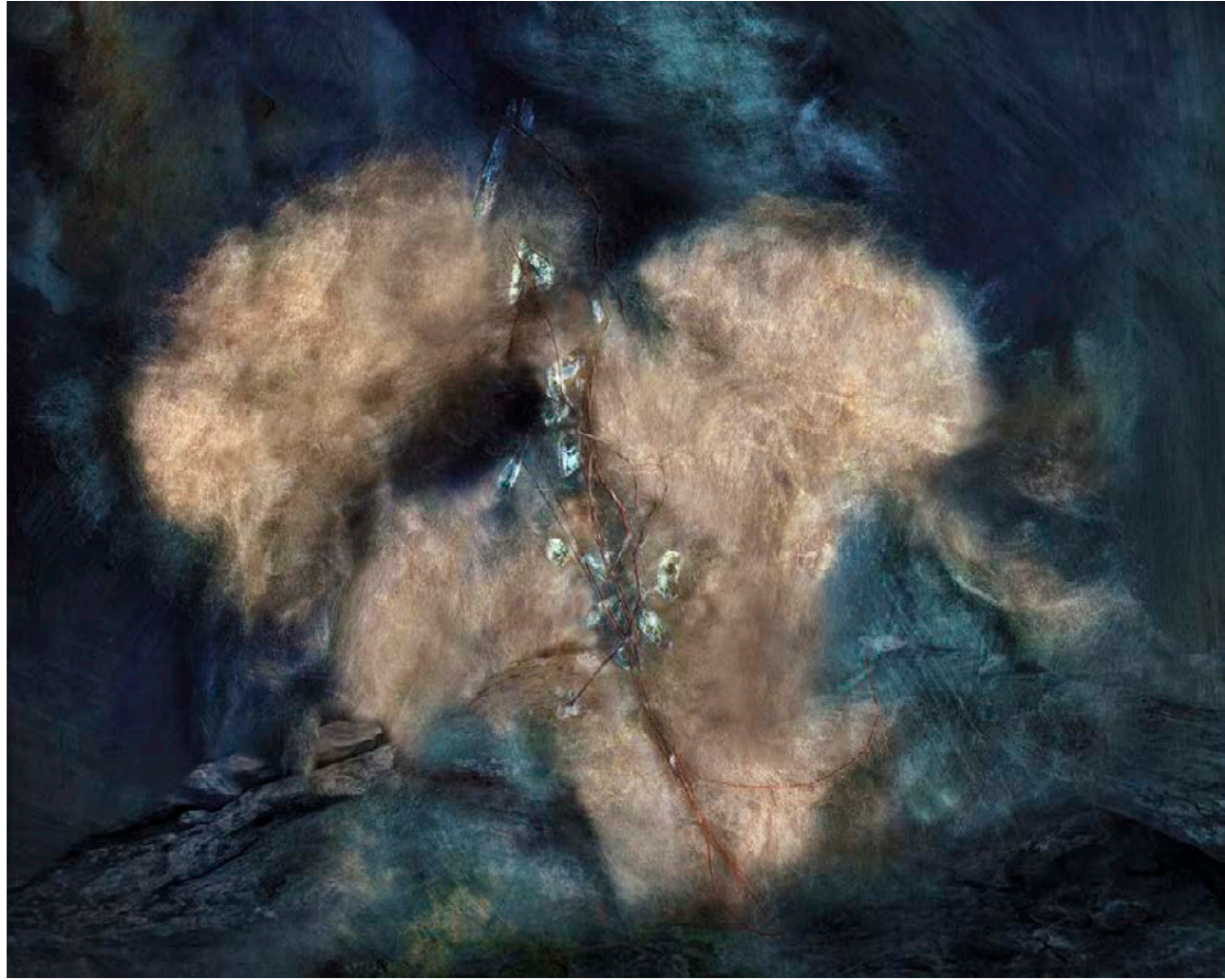




Stormy Weather
24" x 36"
Painted metal
2019

Phallic Birthstone
36" x 48"
Painted on paper
2020





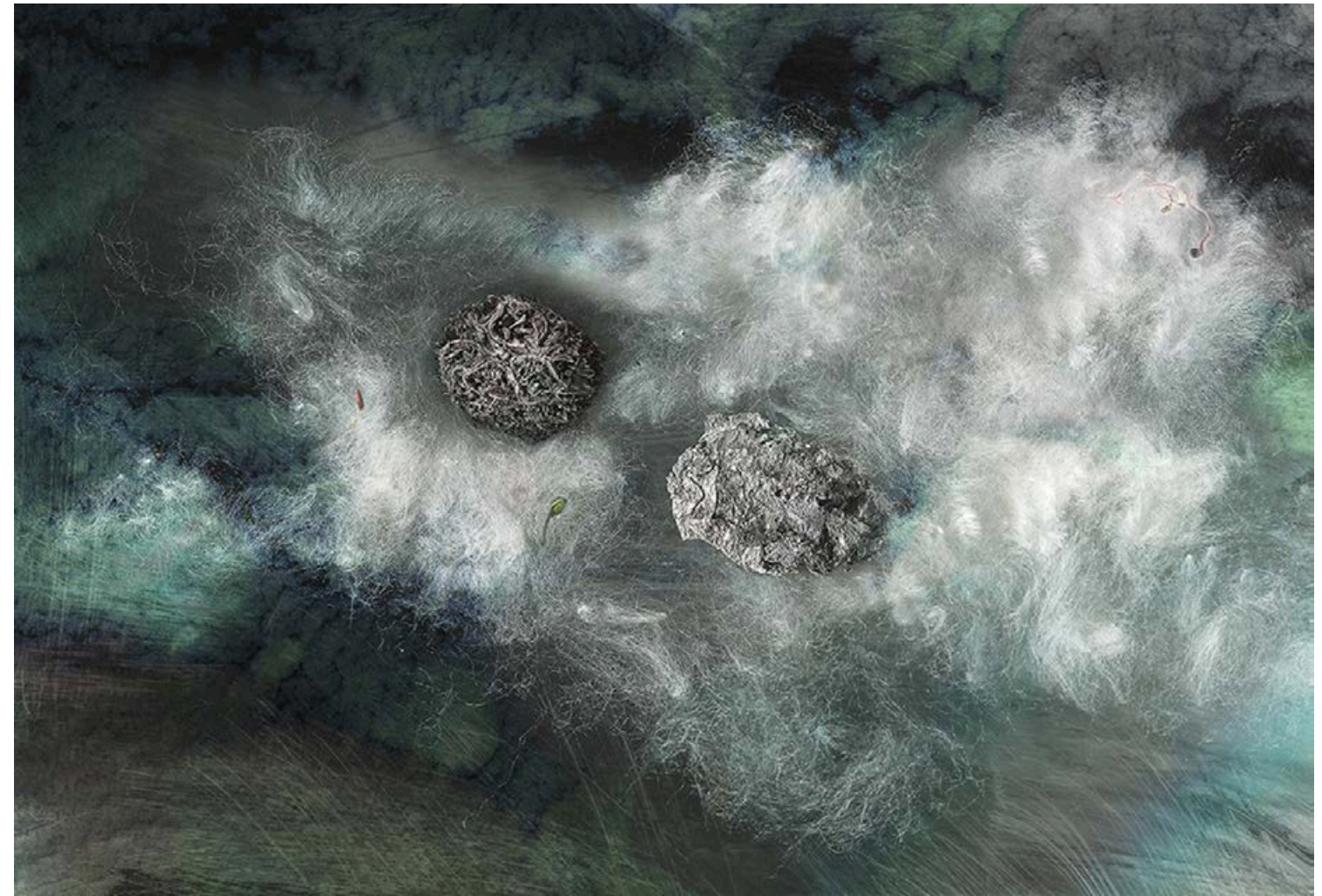
Flying Crystal
24"x32"
Painted on paper
2020



Queen Creosote
24"x36"
Painted metal
2017



Sleeping Poppies
24" x 30"
Painted metal
2017



Darker Matters
22" x 32"
Painted metal
2017



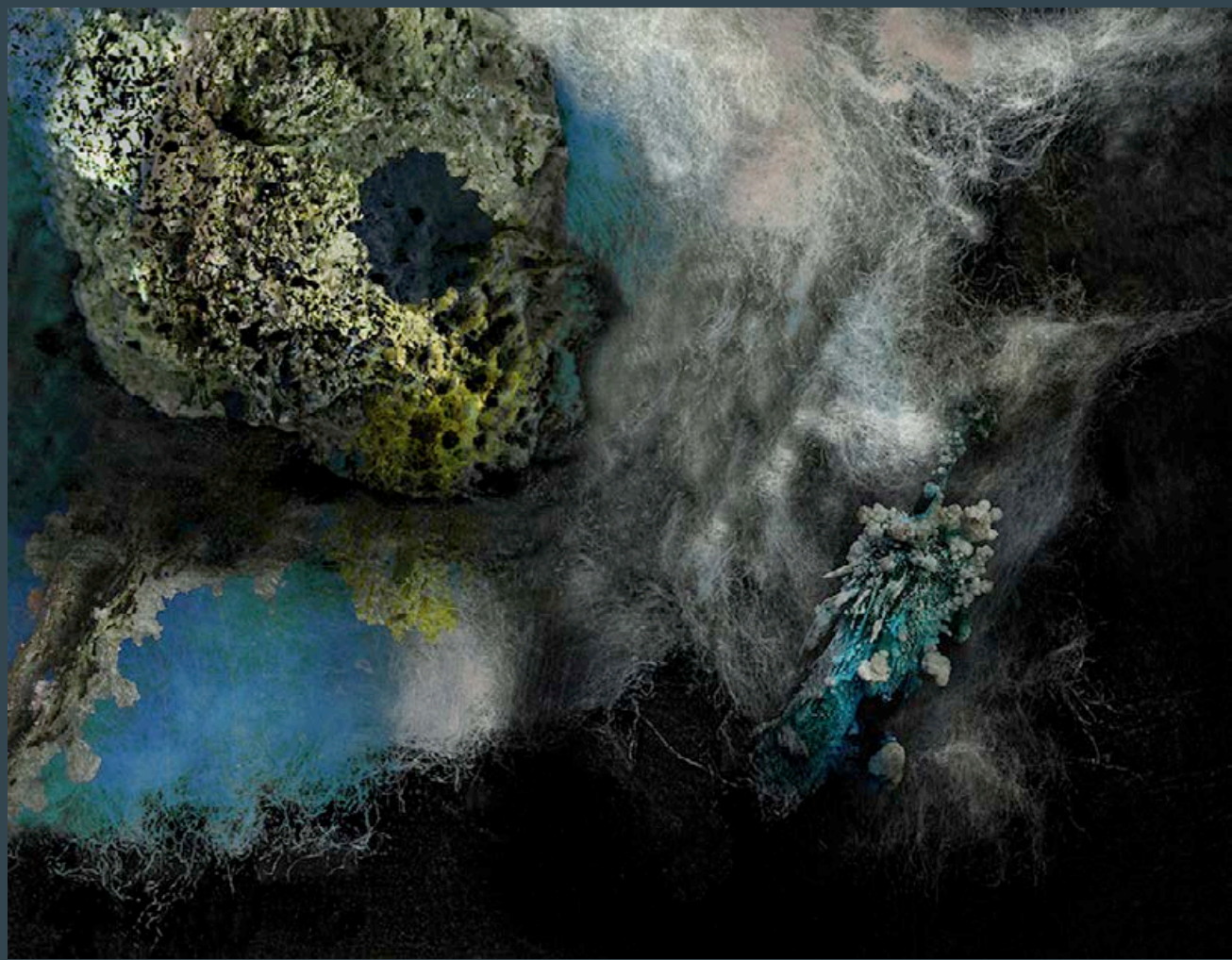
Wasp's Nest
24"x32"
Painted paper
2020



Mica Handed
44"x26"
Painted metal
2020



Fossilized
24"x36"
Painted metal
2018

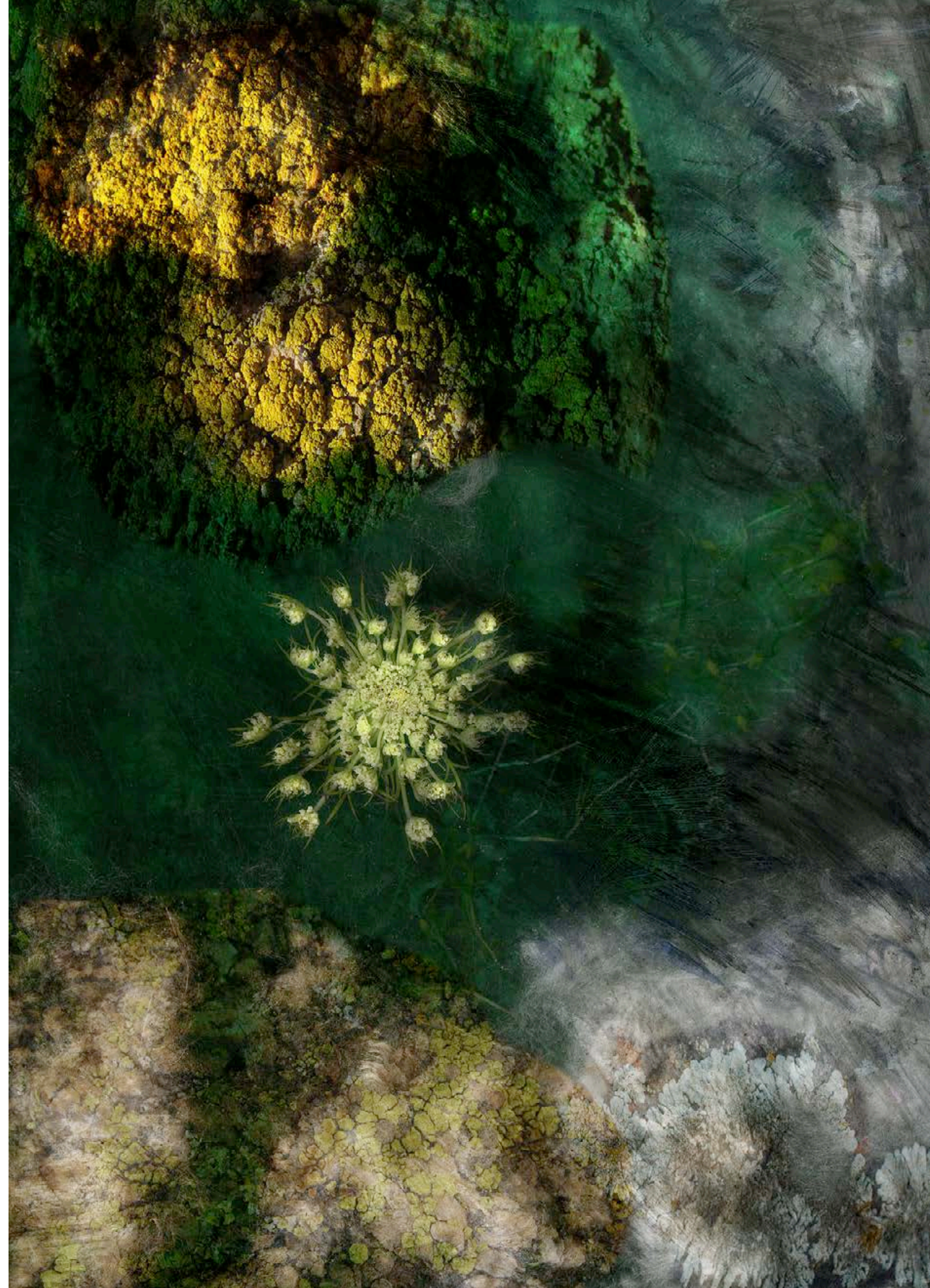


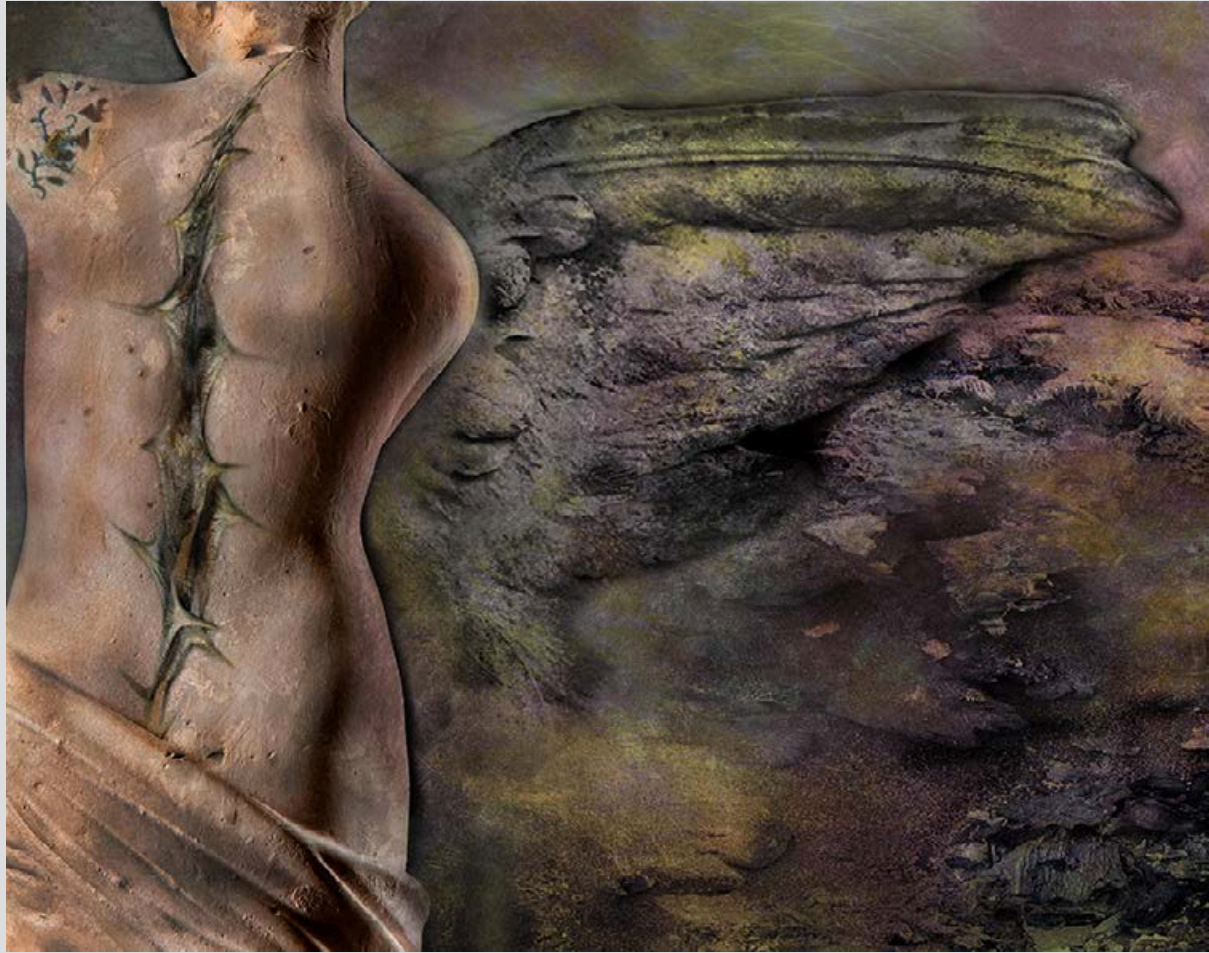
Yellowstone
24" x 32"
Painted paper
2020



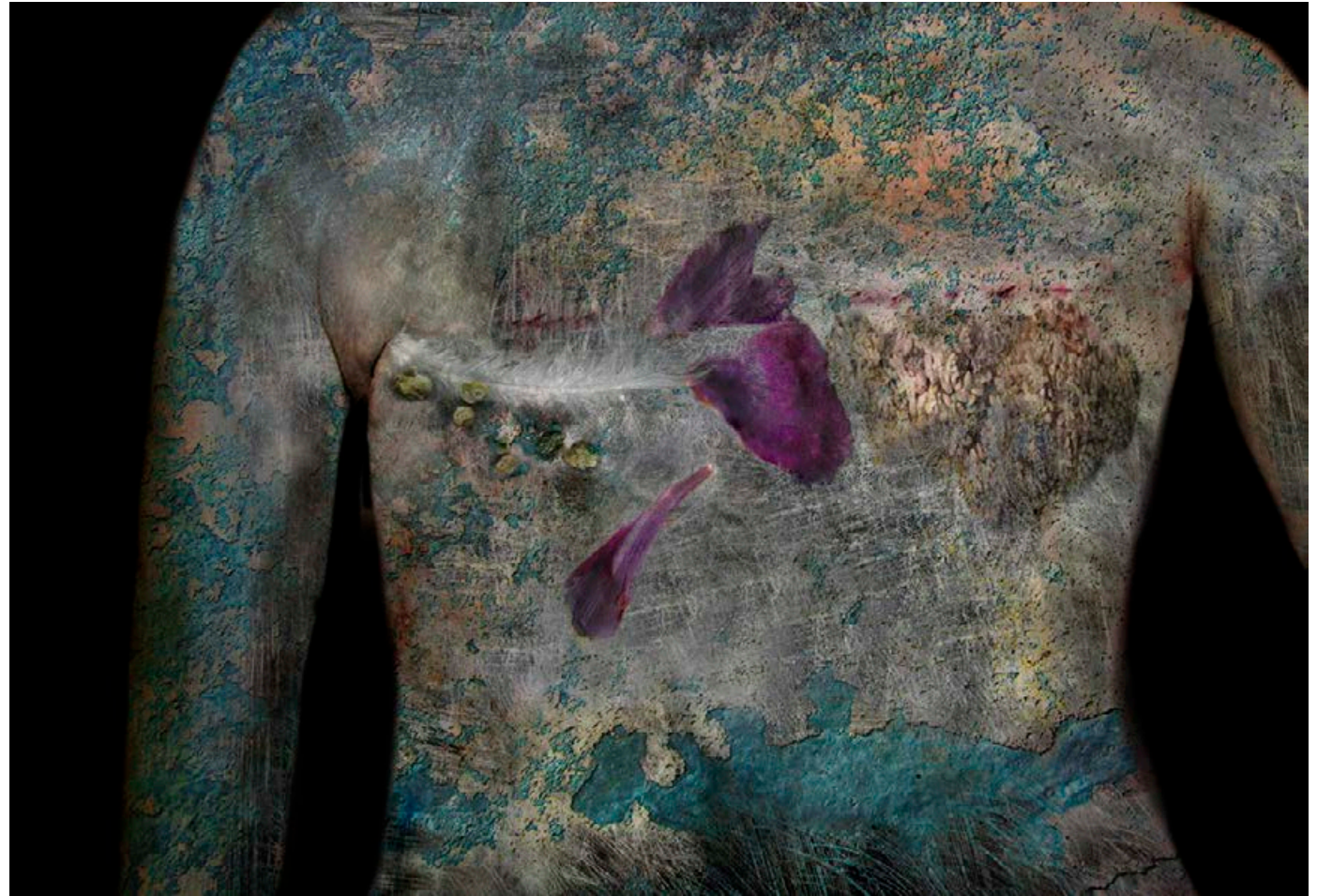
Branching Out
24" x 32"
Painted metal
2019

Green Seeded
24"x34"
Painted paper
2020





Tattooed Winged
24" x 36"
Painted paper
2018



Scarred Flowers
24" x 32"
Painted paper
2018

A painting featuring a dark, glossy snake coiled around a human skull. The snake's body is thick and textured, with a lighter-colored underbelly. The skull is positioned at the bottom right, showing the eye sockets and nasal cavity. In the background, there are translucent, blue-tinted leaves and a large, pinkish-purple flower with a dark center. The overall composition is dark and moody, with a focus on the interplay of life and death.

Gary Brewer

Constellation
30" x 30"
Oil on canvas
2018



Wild is the Wind
84"×60"
Oil on canvas
2018





The Emergence of Form
40"x30"
Oil on canvas
2017



The Imponderable Agents
66"x48"
Oil on canvas
2018



Metamorphic Fire
84"x30"
Oil on canvas
2018



Nina Simone Sings
84"x30"
Oil on canvas
2018

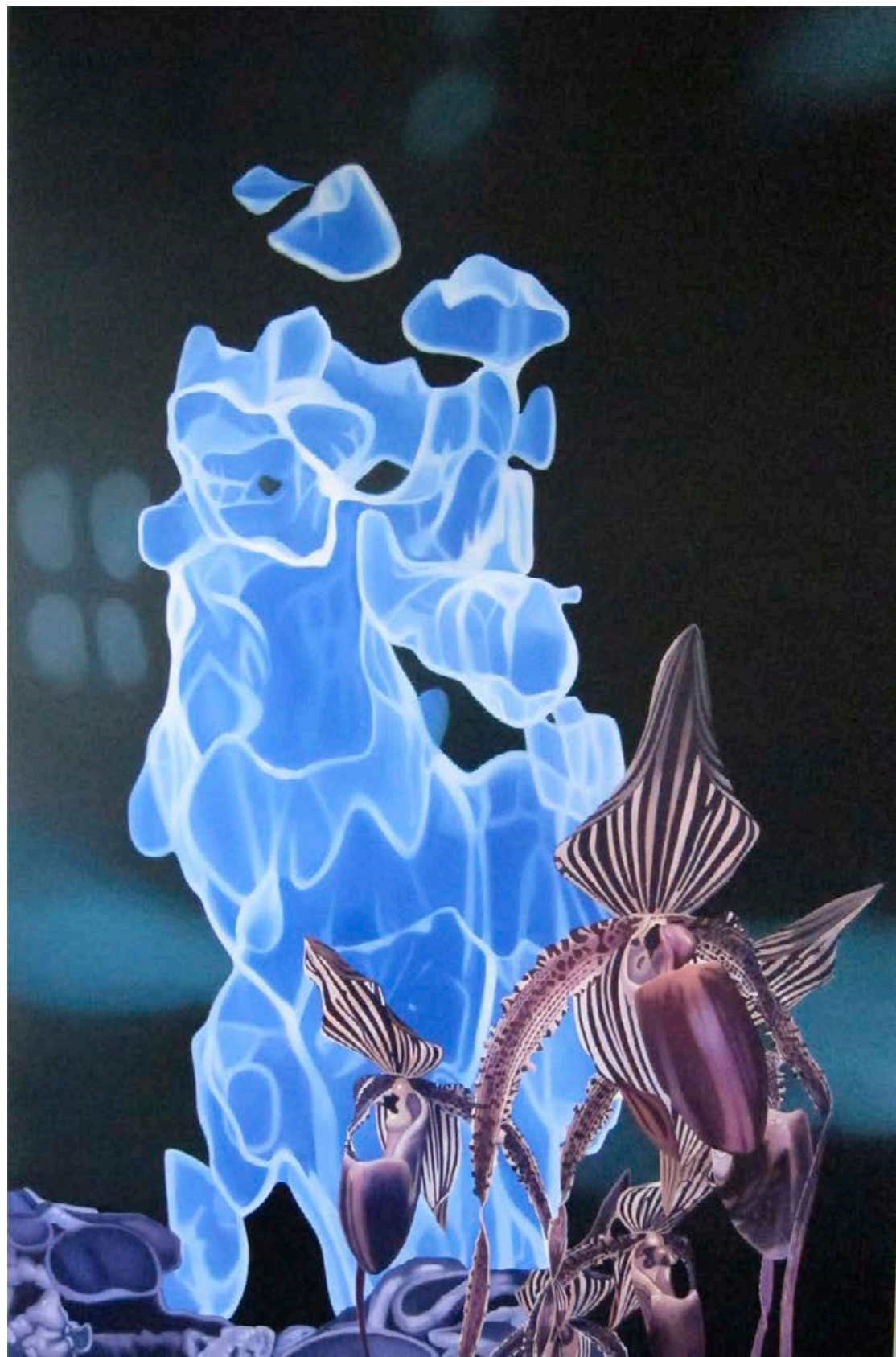


Theater of Form
84"x60"
Oil on canvas
2016

(left image)
Radiant Sublime
40"x30"
Oil on canvas
2018



Nature Dreams Baroque
40"x30"
Oil on canvas
2018



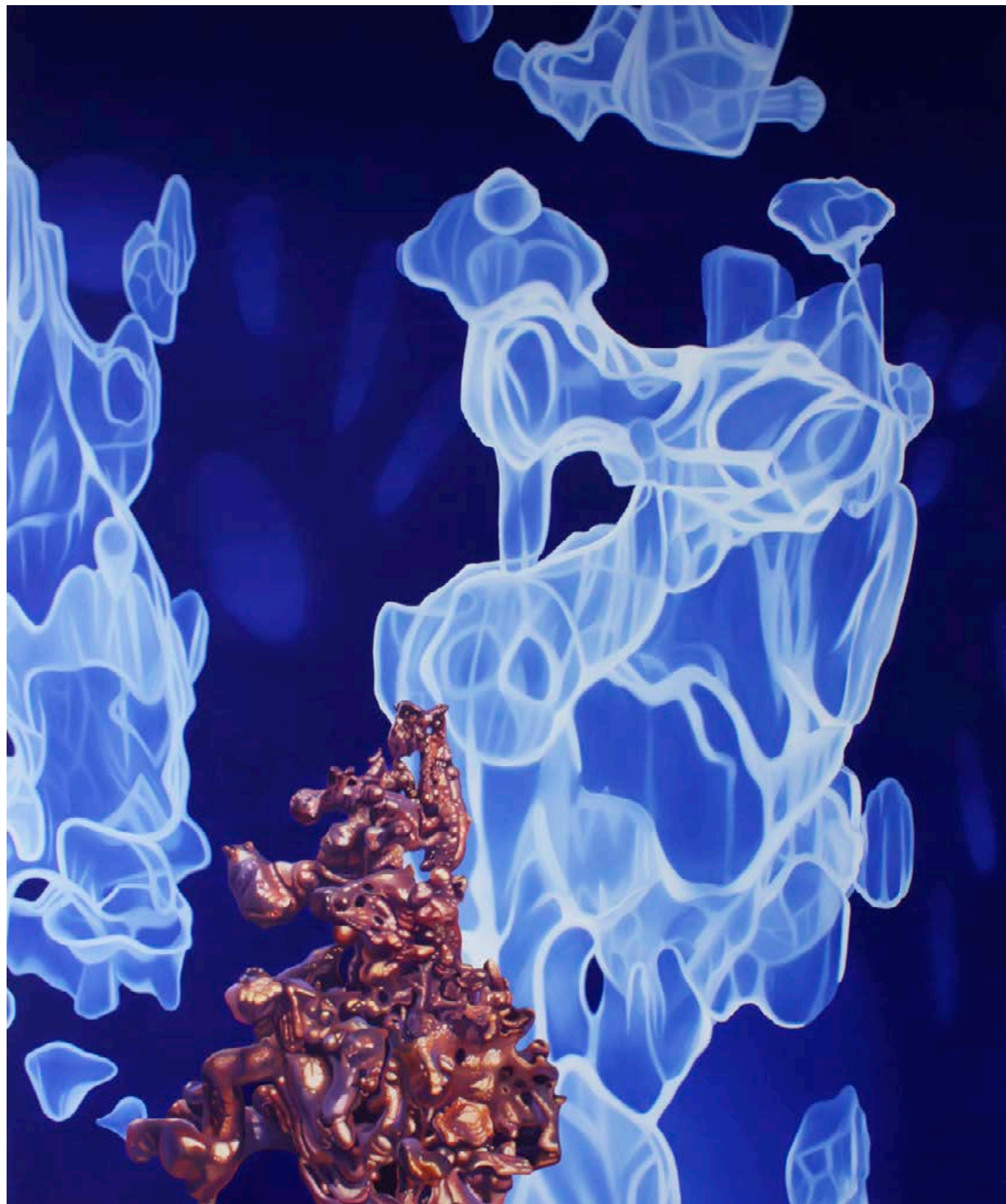
Dark Matters
96"x60"
Oil on canvas
2018



Ultra Violet Memory
60"x48"
Oil on canvas
2018



Gravity's Rainbow
84"x30"
Oil on canvas
2018



Secrets and Emanations
96"×80"
Oil on canvas
2015



Alchemical Language
60"×40"
Oil on canvas
2016



GARY BREWER & ALINE MARE
Biographies



Photo by Ellen Burman

ALINE MARE BIOGRAPHY

Aline Mare began her career in the Lower East Side of Manhattan, coming out of a background of theatre, experimental film, and installation art. She was an early member of Collaborative Projects, a collective formed in downtown New York City and performed in a multi-media partnership, Erotic Psyche, a film and music extravaganza exploring the body and the senses, which toured extensively in Manhattan and Europe throughout the 80s.

She completed undergraduate work at SUNY Buffalo's Center for Media Studies and an MFA from San Francisco Art Institute, where she produced the film Saline's Solution, a series of installations and performances that dealt with abortion from a feminist point of view, which garnered support and awards internationally, exhibiting at The Cinematheque in SF, The Whitney Museum and the Museum of Modern Art in NYC. She has received several grants and residencies including Fourwinds in Aureille, France, a 2015 Sino-American art tour in Shanghai, Starry Nights in New Mexico, Headlands Center for the Arts, Kala, Film Arts Foundation, New Langton Arts in SF and a New York State Residency for the Arts.

She continues to expand her work, concentrating on mixed media and installation, exploring the body and metaphors of nature and its transformative relationship to the human psyche and the state of our planet. New works have been exhibited locally and internationally in venues including the Griffin Museum, Turtle Bay Museum, Thoreau Center in San Francisco, the Santa Monica Museum, San Luis Obispo Museum, Castelli Gallery in Gainesville Georgia, the 2019 Jerusalem Biennial, and MOAH Museum in Lancaster, CA. Recent shows include the Mike Kelley Gallery, George Billis Gallery, Noysky Projects, Sturt Haaga Gallery, Jill Joy Gallery, SOLA Gallery, and Open Mind Space in Los Angeles. Her work is included in several private collections in the Bay Area, New York City, China, and Los Angeles.



Photo by Ellen Burman

GARY BREWER BIOGRAPHY

Gary Brewer was raised in Lancaster, California. His father was a test pilot and later became an engineer in the aerospace industry, working to land a man on the moon. As a young child he would walk to the end of the street, which came to a dead end at the edge of the desert, and watch the X-15 coming in for a landing after skirting the edge of the atmosphere. It was here that the first philosophical musings arose in his young mind. When he stood on the pavement of the street he was in 'civilization', but by simply stepping over the edge onto the desert sand, he was back in 'nature' among the Road Runners, Jack Rabbits, Horny Toads and Kangaroo Rats that were his companions on excursions into the wild.

His interest in the intersection between art, science and nature was in part inspired by the mixture of dreams of space and the tenacity of the flora and fauna of the desert.

His works have been exhibited in museums and galleries in San Francisco, New York and Los Angeles. Last year in 2019 he had three solo exhibitions of his work: Infinite Morphologies at Marie Baldwin Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, The Shape of Time, Irvine Fine Arts Center, Irvine, CA and his first solo show in Europe, Multiple Universes at Adelinda Allegretti Gallery in Umbria, followed by work exhibited at the Carousel de Louvre Art Festival at the Louvre, Paris, France.

He has curated several exhibitions including: Them; Artists, Scientists and Designers Concerned with the Entomological World at SOMARTS, San Francisco, CA, 1999 and The Age of Wonder; Artist's Engaged with the Natural World Turtle Bay Museum, Redding, CA in 2011. Other recent curated shows include BLUE, PØST, Los Angeles, CA 2018, I Am Nature, Loft at Liz's, Los Angeles, CA 2019, Erotic-Vulvic-Phallic, PØST 2019, Los Angeles, CA, and Woven Threads: The Migration of Myths and Metaphors, Brandstater Gallery, La Sierra University, Riverside, CA, 2020.




Artist's studios, Bendix Building, Los Angeles.

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THE ART OF GARY BREWER AND ALINE MARE

15 March–16 April, 2020

 Mt. San Antonio College
Diana Berger Art Gallery
Building 1B/C
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Walnut, CA 91789

garybrewerart.com alinemare.com

