

C. Gregory Gummersall

The character of American art as it has developed since the early 1900s has been strongly influenced by the spirit of the American West, the sweeping individualism, the essence of possibility.

“There is a homogeneousness of painting going on across the country,” said Dr. Susan Landauer, curator of the San Jose Museum of Art at the Richard Diebenkorn symposium in Taos, New Mexico.

The paintings of C. Gregory Gummersall are not defined by East Coast or West Coast or any ism, but have evolved from art history.

In his work one sees this spirit of the American West and senses this combination of influence from West Coast artists like John Corbett and Richard Diebenkorn, along with East Coast contemporaries Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns and Cy Twombly. Abstract collage and multi-layered media are used by Gummersall to create his large, expressionistic canvases. His canvases are more subdued like color field painting, and there is an element of minimalism to this recent series of paintings, the muted earth tones and vivid cobalts and reds incorporating chiaroscuro.

Gummersall adds elements of calligraphy to his work that is cryptological and like Cy Twombly did, blurs the line between drawing and painting. Gummersall uses primitive symbols and nonsensical lines and squiggles that are similar to endless markings on a blackboard.

Through these markings one realizes that Gummersall is an improvisational painter, creating below the level of his conscious mind. His paintings are the exploration of his experience. These are paintings of summer thunderstorms on the Colorado plateau. Not as the artist physically saw it through his eyes, but what he experienced through his every atom and cell. These are sweeping works of individual expression.

Scholar and writer Gerald Nordland says that all artists are influenced by others; it is what the artist does with the influence that is important. What Gummersall does is create his own form of art, deeply rooted in the experiments of east and west coast artists. Expressive, colorful, dark, minimal—Gummersall expresses his experience of life in the west and his travels around the country. He makes art that is a melting of urban and rural mixed in with a huge amount of soul.

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