

CONOR FAGAN
#7 HOWARD COOK LN
ROSWELL, NM
88201

WWW.CONORFAGAN.COM
CONORFMT@GMAIL.COM
231 342 4999

Artist Statement

While living in Nova Scotia, I found myself preoccupied by the alchemical traditions of color production during the Medieval and Renaissance periods. Coupled with this, I became fascinated by the culture and particular artistic milieu of northern Europe during this time. My mentor was Pieter Brueghel the Elder, and my fantasized ideas of his world and surroundings. Color became a force that was extracted from bones, earth and cauldrons. When I walked by the ocean, picking up rocks, bones, shells and other ephemera, the potential color hidden within the landscape-at-large fascinated me. The idea of alchemy as a form of quasi-magic set the stage for my own modern interpretations of the transformative power hidden within the physical world and its manifestations within my work.

During the creation of a painting, I begin by applying paint to the surface of the canvas in a purely abstract and reactive process. Over time, brush strokes and painterly passages begin to take on weight and the first objects and spatial phenomenon begin to emerge. Many of these original passages will be destroyed as I continue to explore the surface of the canvas. This absence sometimes becomes its own separate structure and gains definition and presence within the painting. At other times, multiple marks accumulate to create atmospheric and spatial effects. Eventually, as the composition asserts itself, the elemental tug of war is refined into a realization of illusory space and form. The resulting paintings contain interacting aspects of the surreal, still life, landscape and elemental forces.

The idea of alchemy as a metaphor for the art making process itself, and an interest in the working methodologies of early surrealism, combined and led me to use color as the means to mine the unconscious for imagery. I arrived at a form of automatic process that utilizes color as the driving force, attaining imagery and objects that retain an uncanny relationship with the physical world. I think of the objects that populate my work as proto-forms. They seem to hover at the edge of the familiar without crossing the boundary into the identifiable.