

TELLURIDE GALLERY OF FINE ART

# Fluid Motion

James Hayward

Andy Moses

Jennifer Wolf

December 15, 2019 - January 10, 2020

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# Fluid Motion

The late Agnes Martin, like so many artists before and since, insisted that understanding her paintings required face-to-face time—no photograph would suffice. In a now-famous exchange, an art critic asked her, “How much time?” “Oh, a minute,” Martin replied. The critic looked baffled, so she elaborated: “A minute is quite a long time.”

That is one of the marvels of a well-made painting—which might take weeks, months, or years to realize. In just a short time, it can sear into you and still feel spontaneous, alive, and immediate, even if it is, in fact, the product of painstaking effort and a mastery built up over the years.

Spending a full minute with any painting by the three artists in this exhibition—James Hayward, Andy Moses, and Jennifer Wolf—would offer at least as many sensorial thrills as a dive into a cold lake or a spin down a windy road with windows open. So much goes into preparing, composing, and building-up for each work. A brief in-person encounter has almost too much to give, including a sense of mystery that lingers even after you’ve more or less figured out how a painting is made. Whereas, if seen on a screen, it would be frighteningly easy to categorize the work by, for instance, calling Hayward an “abstract minimalist” and then assuming you understand him. However, for Hayward, the process involves piling on marks until the surface becomes a virtuosic impasto. For Moses, over a week of preparation and planning precedes one long session of strategic, exhilarating paint pouring. For Wolf, excavation and a search for pigment lead to prolonged development and then finally to the focused sessions that result in her fluid, undulating surfaces.

These three Los Angeles artists, each of a different era, share commonalities that cut across dramatic evolutions in 20th-21st-century painting. James Hayward, who began working in L.A. in the 1960s and then returned again in the 1970s after completing an MFA at the University of Washington, married the painterly gusto of expressionism with the surface-savvy of his SoCal peers while maintaining certain minimalist impulses that confoundingly contrast his excesses. He knew the late artist Ed Moses, Andy

Moses’ father, well. Andy Moses, raised in a still-forming and thus still permissive L.A. art world, graduated from California Institute of the Arts in 1982, then spent nearly two decades on the East Coast before returning to Venice Beach in the early 2000s. His conceptual experiments with text and image eventually gave way to a more guttural abstraction, but one that sidesteps the cult of the artist’s hand in a decidedly postmodern way. His paintings appear, deceptively, as if they had always already been fully formed. Jennifer Wolf, a friend of Moses, began painting in the mid-1990s. Her interest in mining her own colors shaped her transition toward a sensual, naturalistic abstraction, which at first defied the anti-painting sentiment that defined the discourse around art-making at the end of the 20th century and then later coincided with a return to intuitive abstraction by many young artists, including women who saw fluidity as a way to resist abstraction’s historic machismo. Moses and Wolf exhibit a more distant relationship to the painterly touch than Hayward. Yet, all three artists consistently achieve a sense of arrested motion, as if a clock stopped as the materials were still reinventing themselves. They also share a relationship to purity far less dogmatic than obsessive and particular, and thus attractively human.

In 2004, the art critic Christopher Knight, a long-time fan of Hayward’s work, wrote of seeing a white, square 1979 Hayward painting at the Laguna Art Museum. Knight at first associated the “pure, uninflected white acrylic” with “the

secular spirituality associated with abstract white squares” in 20th-century art. But then he noticed a slight blemish just off-center, “Is this a blot on the pure abstraction of perfect harmony and balance?” Of course, it was. Hayward’s approach to purity thrills precisely because it has never quite been pure. The paintings featured in this show, among the impasto works he began making in the 1980s, remain singular and abstract while also conveying alluringly inclusive energy. At first, the blue Abstract #147 (2008) and gray Abstract #139 (2007), appear as textured monochromes. After a closer, lengthier look, they reveal themselves as layered, the colors beneath subtly resonate, and they begin to read like a community of gestures, building until their idiosyncrasies merge, their togetherness the only plot in the narrative of this work.

In contrast, Andy Moses’ colors stand alone, each allowed their own space and identity. He includes a thin line of black between each of the colors included in his pour paintings, though occasionally black blurs slightly into a matte orange or a dark red. Moses, who began experimenting with pour paintings in the 1980s, has, over the years, honed the techniques he now uses to create a flow of iridescent paint that appears to move even after it has dried. His interest in nature and abstraction manifests as a kind of world-making, each painting a universe unto itself, with streams of colors that conjure the geological and cosmic—sediment, rivers, rippling clouds. His recent round, canvas-covered panels read as more surreal and otherworldly than his previous horizontal rectangles—the shape art history has taught us to associate with landscapes—even if round shapes are actually far more natural than right angles and straight edges. Geodesy 1218 (2019) features a palette of oranges, blues, gold, red, fuchsia, and turquoise. While the other colors glow, in ways that sometimes suggest they’re protruding from the canvas, the orange is notably flatter, and the contrast in sheen makes the painting seem all the more dimensional. Taken as a whole, Moses’ paintings have distinct gravitas. Still, the most gratifying moments are the small, intricate ones, like a tiny speck of black appearing in

an otherwise unadulterated expanse of orange, reminding us not to take the composition’s precision and grandeur for granted.

Jennifer Wolf’s approach also brings abstraction into direct conversation with natural formations, although in a more translucent, elemental way. Wolf, who began mining her own pigments from the landscape in the late 1990s, uses a palette that is literally impossible-to-replicate—even she can never make the same color twice. Her studio functions as a laboratory for different, intense engagements with pigment and surface. Her colors have geographical specificity since certain pigments come from visits to South America, Greece, or the Santa Barbara Mountains. From a distance, the works feel as though they’ve resulted from single gestures, her deep absorption in process manifests in an economic clarity. For instance, in Gravitational Push (2015), a wave of indigo interrupts an expanse of cochineal that ranges from deep fuchsia to a rose-orange. It looks as if a dark, inky cloud is spreading across a vibrant sunset. Over the indigo floats a honey-comb-like pattern of translucent white, which Wolf realized by dragging acrylic medium across the surface in a process that has come to define her “flow” paintings. In 2008, art writer Peter Frank noted: “flow is not a movement but a state of mind.” Wolf’s use of pattern and her paintings’ often perpetually wet and kinetic character make it seem all the more as if she’s zoomed in on and then frozen in time some striking, geological formation.

In going through our typical days, we rarely get to stare head-on into the density of our own sensorial experiences; instead, sensations, visions, and feelings spread out across time, making it difficult to trace their cumulative effect on our nerve endings. But Hayward, Moses, and Wolf compress that density for us, their paintings offering an opportunity to feel and understand all that one moment can contain—an impossibility in many contexts. A minute with Abstract #125, Geodesy 131, or Landscape #3 might offer enough to last some time, but you can always return for more.

- Catherine Wagley



# James Hayward

Abstract #203, 2014  
oil on canvas on wood panel  
20" x 19"



Abstract #147, 2008  
oil on canvas on wood panel  
24" x 21"





Abstract #139, 2007  
oil on canvas on wood panel  
58" x 48"





Abstract #214, 2014  
oil on canvas on wood panel  
37" x 35"



Abstract #125, 2007  
oil on canvas on wood panels  
58" x 48"





# Andy Moses

Geodesy #1219, 2019  
acrylic on canvas over circular wood panel  
60" x 60"



Geodesy #1218, 2019  
acrylic on canvas over circular wood panel  
60" x 60"





Geodesy #1204, 2019  
acrylic on canvas over circular wood panel  
60" x 60"







Geodesy #126, #115, #131, 2019  
acrylic on lucite panel  
16" x 16" each

# Jennifer Wolf

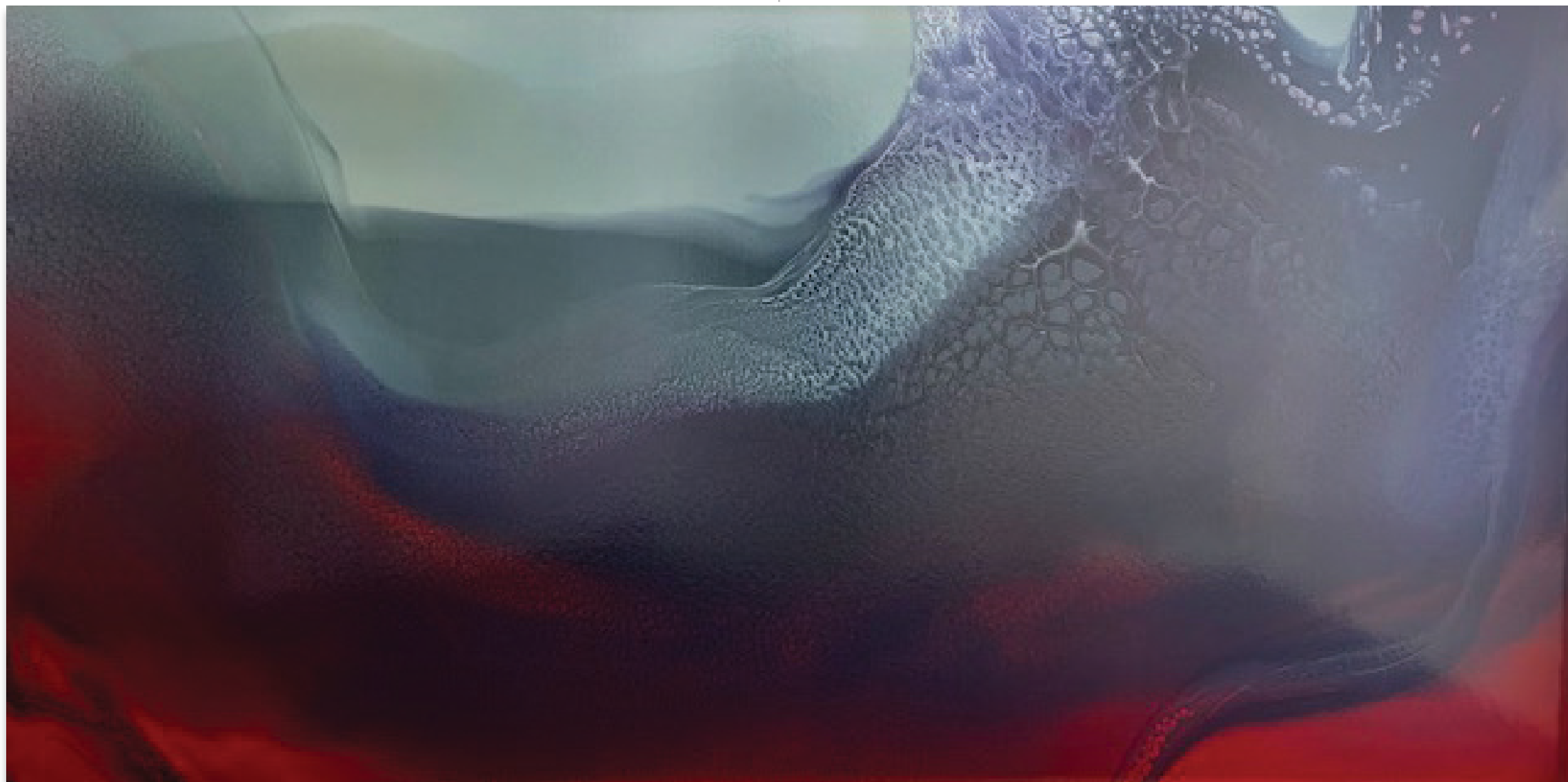
Sound of Speed, 2015  
natural dyes, hand ground mineral pigment, acrylic medium on canvas  
60" x 60"







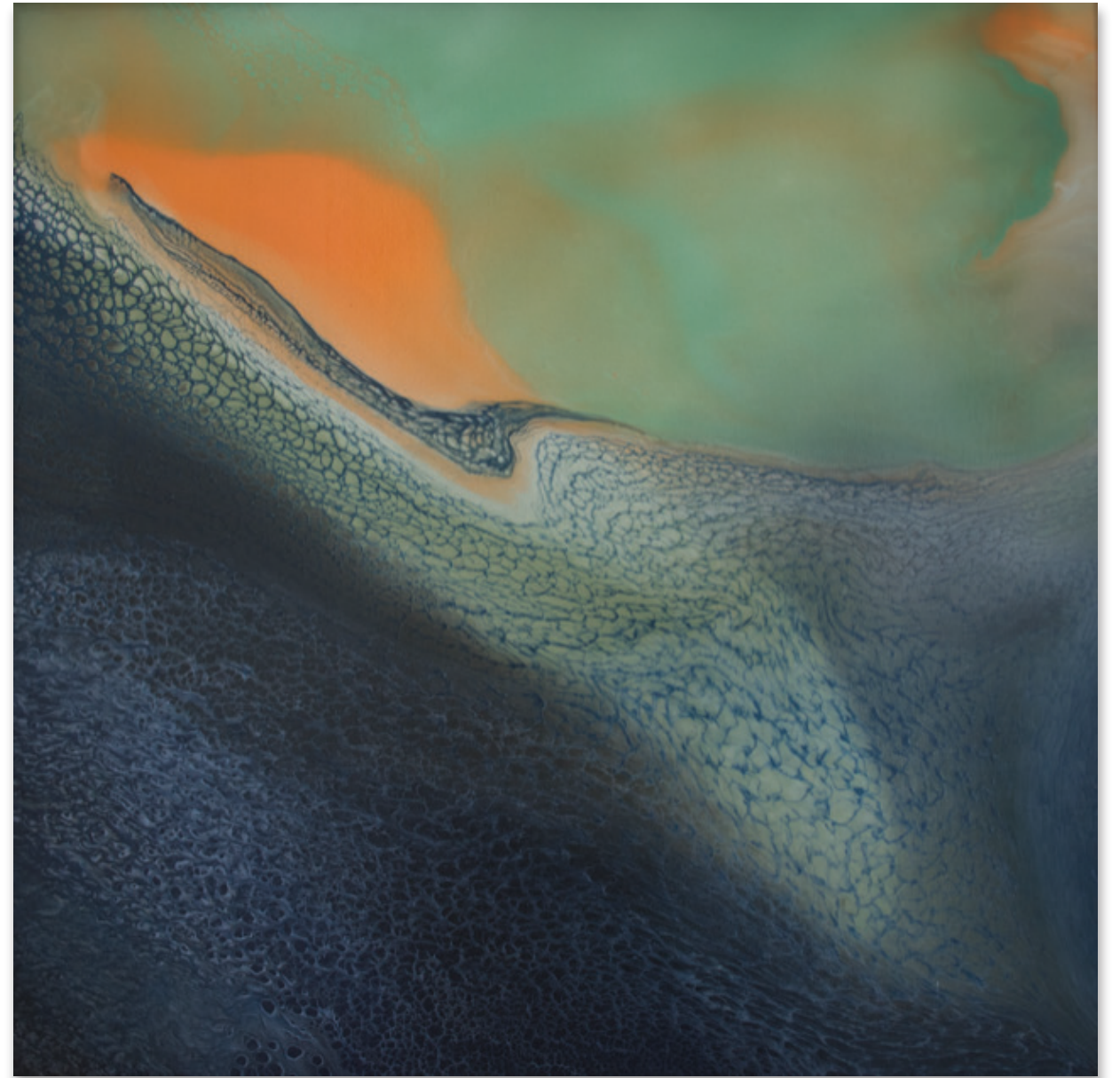
Gravitational Push, 2015  
natural dyes, hand ground mineral pigment, acrylic medium on canvas  
48" x 84"

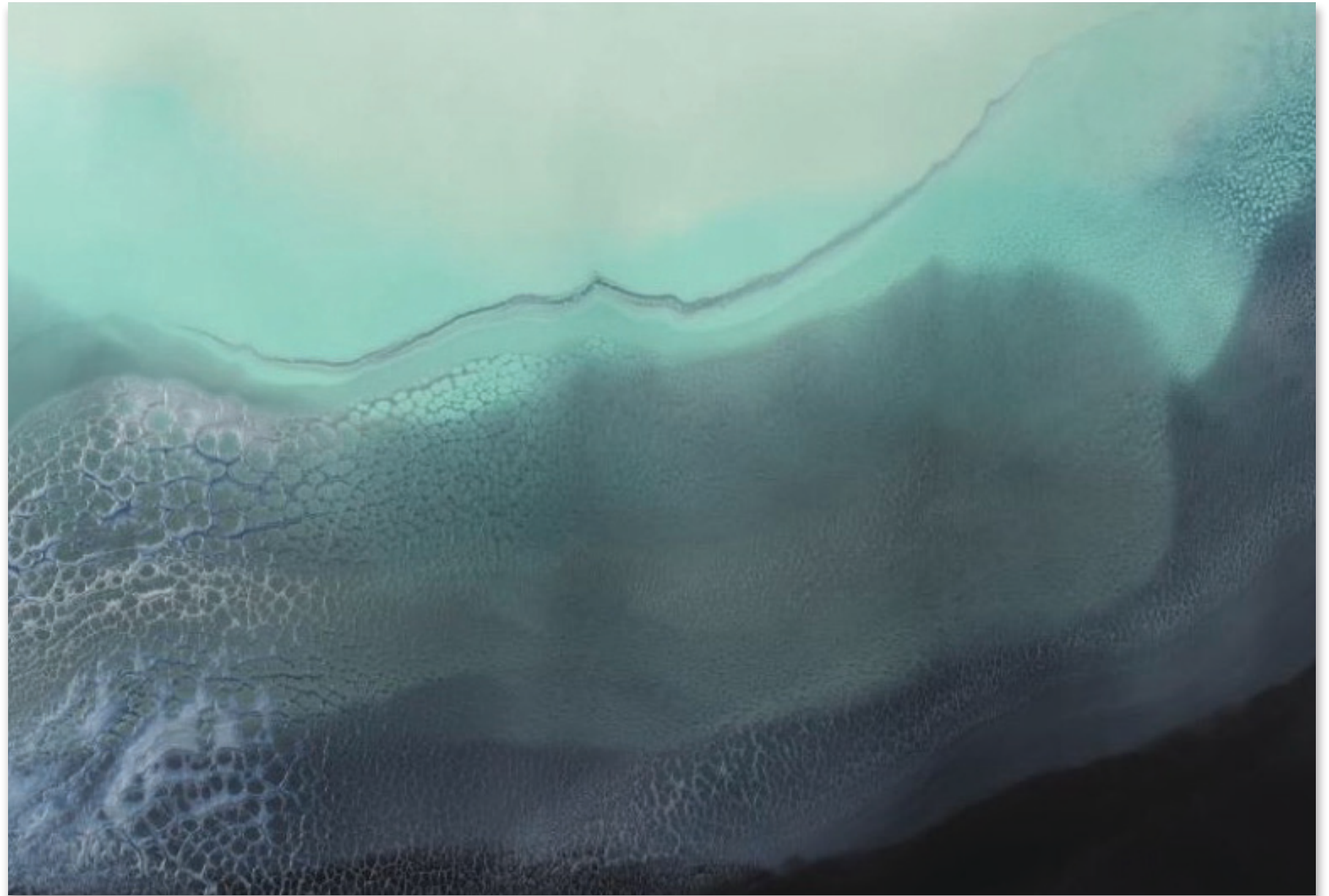


Isolation, 2015  
natural dyes, hand ground mineral pigment, acrylic medium on canvas  
42" x 84"



Landscape #17, 2013  
natural dyes, hand ground mineral pigment, acrylic medium on canvas  
48" x 48"





Landscape #10, 2013  
natural dyes, hand ground mineral pigment, acrylic medium on canvas  
48" x 72"





Landscape #1, 2013  
natural dyes, hand ground mineral pigment, acrylic medium on canvas  
48" x 72"



#1 & #2, 2019  
 natural dyes, hand ground mineral pigment, acrylic medium on canvas  
 36" x 36" each



Rincon #8, 2012  
natural dyes, hand ground mineral pigment, acrylic medium on canvas  
48" x 48"



# Selected Collections & Accolades

## James Hayward

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA  
Minneapolis Institute of the Arts, Minneapolis, MN  
Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA  
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA  
Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship, 1983  
National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, 1993  
Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant, 1996

## Andy Moses

Laguna Museum of Art, Laguna Beach, CA  
American Jewish University, Bel Air, CA  
Frederick Weisman Museum, Malibu, CA  
Flow Riverside Art Museum, Riverside, CA  
Beliefs Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport Beach, CA  
Fondazione Michetti, Rome, Italy

## Jennifer Wolf

A+D Museum Exhibition, Los Angeles, CA  
Riverside Art Museum Exhibition, Los Angeles, CA  
Anderson Ranch Brooks Scholarship, 2009

