

The accumulation of black and white paint within this work serves as a visual exploration of the dichotomous relationship between chance occurrence and purposeful action. Two differing processes are balanced to dictate the outcome of each work. The preliminary treatment of surfaces represents a chance operation and involves the limitation of control over visual results. Impulsive placement of liquid paint and the use of gravity to arbitrarily push and pull it across a surface allow the oppositional elements to react to one another unpredictably. By contrast, the application of dots and concentric circles is a deliberate approach. It calls attention to extensive control and determination with paint, accepting the initial layer as a foundation for premeditated pattern. This divergence in processes is parallel to the reality that human experience is the balance of what we do with what happens to us. Mirroring this metaphor, the consistent use of black and white paint offers a direct visual correlation to the constant play of positive and negative that defines our consciousness. The resulting paintings are a meditation as to the nature of being.

Working with fluid paint allows for the volatility that is fundamental to the initial impulsive work as well as the immediate intricacy involved in the consequent focused application of drops. Additionally, the fullest contrast and richness of value possible are ideal for both processes. My technique has evolved to produce efficiency in the use of materials and the minimization of mistakes. Surfaces for painting are often pre-existing and either carefully selected from a multitude of possibilities, as with lakeshore rocks, or chosen impetuously from what is at hand. These factors combine to heighten the ease and simplicity of the creative process, allowing mindful attention to be directed most effortlessly to painting.

The contrast between the coincidental and the intended presents itself in the selection of substrates ranging from ordinary rock fragments to found items of subjective relevance. Lake Huron shoreline rocks are chosen for their specific form, however it is happenstance that causes one to catch my eye amid such a vastly rocky landscape. Chance also determines the fractures, and therefore the surfaces to be painted, as I smash rocks together and gather the resultant fragments to peruse. Other substrates include remnants from previous art endeavors such as woodblocks used for relief prints, or objects from my personal history chosen for their sentimental or allusive qualities.

Attainment of harmonic coexistence between oppositional processes and materials necessitates the completion of these paintings. It is this striving for balance within visual convergence that imparts a calming, mindful awareness and a retreat from the superficiality, the clinging, and the anxiety of life. My hope is that these positive results are passed on to the viewer, instilling some new sense of balance or peace within.

Joel Berry

2009