

Michael Moore: Around Me Collection CAE2301

Introduction/Abstract

This career-spanning archive is an overview of the artist Michael Moore's work as a painter and printmaker. The works are primarily landscapes around his studios above Winnemucca and Smoke Creek Desert, but also includes work about the built environment in those desert locales.

Biographical Note: Michael Moore

Michael Moore was born in Los Angeles, California, in 1942 and in his mid-twenties was introduced to the deserts. At Stanford University (1960-64) he was first encouraged in his painting efforts by Matt Kahn and, later, Keith Boyle. The work soon gravitated to the landscape-based abstraction which has remained its primary focus. At Yale for one year in the M.F.A. Program (1964-65) he studied with Jack Tworkov and then remained in New Haven to paint and participate in light and sound experiments with originating members of the Pulsa Group until 1966, when he returned to California. He established a studio on the coast north of Los Angeles where in 1967 and '68 he made a series of paintings characterized by multiple desert/coastal horizons set within brilliant monochrome fields of color.

He returned to New Haven and worked with Pulsa through the winter of 1968-69, then moved to San Francisco, painting houses. Soon after settling there, he began my "voyages of exploration" [1970-84] into northern Nevada and eventually southeastern Oregon. During this period his work was shown frequently in the Bay Area; its imagery progressed from multiple to single horizons, often stretching across multiple canvases. He painted aerial landscapes which mutated into cartoonish abstraction and back again to landscapes with larger flatter areas of color and the odd architectural presence, all between 1977 and 1982. He lived and worked full time in northern California until 1985, but since then has also spent three to five months a year in Nevada, initially at a renovated radar facility near Winnemucca, then at Wall Spring in the Smoke Creek Desert north of Pyramid Lake.

In 1988 he and his wife, the sculptor Linda Fleming established studios in a warehouse in the Mission district of San Francisco, working there until 2000. Throughout that time, he also made artwork at her studio in the mountains of southern Colorado, two or so months each year. He made groups of paintings addressing the war in the Pacific, the Pacific Ocean itself, and revisited an ongoing project involving imaginary indigenous architecture. Many of these have been exhibited, as well as, later, a wall installation of some 100 ink and wash drawings of imagined secret military installations collectively titled "Test Area" at Refusalon in San Francisco in 1998. The work from the rural studios remains consistent with his landscape concerns, both acrylics and the annual "wall of watercolors" from Wall Spring [which typically consists of 80 - 100 watercolor triptychs documenting the look of the desert locale each day spent there in any given year]. The great majority of his work addresses light, space, and memory, anchored by more than fifty years of desert living.

Scope and Content

This career-spanning archive is an overview of the artist's work as a painter and printmaker while living part-time in Nevada from the early 1970s through 2023. The works are primarily landscapes around his studios above Winnemucca and Smoke Creek Desert, but also includes work about the built environment in those desert locales. The archive includes images of works about his father's experiences during WWII in the Pacific Theater, and images of materials from his 2021-2022 Museum exhibition "Visions from Smoke Creek:

Paintings by Michael Moore.” Materials include artist information, digital images of paintings, a set of daily watercolors (2019), pen & ink drawings, prints, exhibition ephemera, and press materials.

This archive is currently in process.