

DUANE CREGGER

CONTEMPORARY ART WORKS

BIOGRAPHY

Duane Cregger is contemporary artist working in oils and acrylics. His large, brightly colored and heavily textured works form an abstract narrative of life in Virginia's Blue Ridge Highlands.

Cregger received a Bachelor of Arts in Art from Roanoke College in Salem, Va. He lived in Washington, D.C. for nearly 15 years, with a successful career in art direction and corporate graphic design; in 2003, he began to paint.



Cregger's work has been featured in *Élan Magazine*, *American Art Collector*, *Cottage Style* by *Better Homes & Gardens*, *Home & Design*, *Richmond Home*, and the *Better Homes & Gardens Home Decorating Guide*. His paintings are found in private and corporate collections throughout the United States, including that of actress/director Drew Barrymore, and in Canada and the Caribbean.

Cregger's work has been featured in the Richmond Symphony Orchestra's 2012 Designer House, a three-month solo salon at the Richmond corporate complex of Capital One, and a juried selection of his work for inclusion in William King Museum's contemporary biennale followed by a curated solo exhibition at the museum. Recent commissions include clients in Houston, San Francisco, Minneapolis, and Ontario.

He is founding member and president of the Appalachian Spirit Artists Cooperative and was appointed to serve on an advisory panel for the Virginia Commission for the Arts from 2009-2012.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Richmond Home | March/April 2009

Home & Design: The Magazine of Architecture and Fine Interiors | July/August 2011

Cottage Style | Fall/Winter 2011

Better Homes & Gardens New Decorating Book | 2011

American Art Collector | August 2012

American Art Collector | September 2012

Cottage Style | Spring/Summer 2013

Élan Magazine: Celebrating the Arts | June 2013

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ARTIST STATEMENT/THEMES

The themes presented in my work center around personal experiences that echo the timeless struggle of individuation and the shared archetypal qualities of human consciousness. I find these same ideas elaborately described in the complex writings of Carl Jung and his expositions on the processes of personality development. It was my first forays into painting that brought me to his writings as I sought confirmation of the experiences that inform my work, and I have found that it is through these personalized experiences that we connect to humanity, all of which experiences the great archetypal ideas through highly personalized events. The paintings form a personal narrative through abstracted color and line, leaving a history of events that are both individually intimate and illustrative of broader ideas regarding human consciousness and the subconscious.

A secondary theme is rooted in my family's heritage and the culture of my home. In 1750, my ancestors traveled the Great Road from Pennsylvania to the Blue Ridge Highlands, and there is a deep imprint of the region's topography and Appalachian culture that has become part of my creative process. The simple and often difficult mountain life of many generations of my family, the arguably abstract crafts of quilting and furniture-building, and the paradoxical mix of regional environmental beauty, human poverty, and rich musical heritage: these are things I sense or encounter daily. I am in constant reconciliation of this part of my identity with the counterweight of my mostly urban adult life. The dearth of contemporary art expression in the Blue Ridge Highlands calls to me to create work that speaks to the largely unchanged centuries-old Appalachian culture through the lens of rural-to-urban (and back to rural) migration.

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STATEMENT ON STUDIO PROCESS

I approach a blank canvas without preconceptions of what the painting will be and begin to gesture sketch lines, shapes, and curves using a combination of charcoal, sepia pencil, china marker, and graphite. For some paintings, the sketch becomes a clear drawing of symbols and sometimes loosely formed words that flow intuitively and quickly; in other works the sketch depicts abstracted objects or a non-objective composition.

From this beginning sketch, I select deep and bright hues of paint, coloring in the nebulous shapes with thick layers of medium, blending some tones into adjacent ones using brush and knife, and, occasionally, thinners. This underpainting begins to take on the quality of a Gees Bend quilt, i.e. organic shapes in bold colors without clear pattern. Here is where I see early childhood images of my Appalachian greatgrandmother and her living room of colorful quilt scraps in paper bags. (Her quilts were sewn for function, and the designs are oddly modern juxtapositions of color and pattern with the heavy texture of batting, stitches, and varied fabrics.) I continue to add paint with a heavy hand, cutting into the thick layers with the wooden end of the brush or another tool in an automatic and personal scribbling that creates an abstract sketch over the paint. The knife comes into play: I pull some paint back, revealing hints of the original drawing. The charcoal and pencil is softened by the play of the paint on the surface, yet creates a sense that of something occurring beneath. I let the work rest for several days. Returning to the piece, I prepare to make bold swaths of color over the entire patchwork composition. I apply the paint liberally and loosely, working over the texture from the first layers, allowing the knife to bounce across a deep texture or a brush or finger to push more paint into a crevice. Here begins the dialogue with the canvas — my reaction to the texture presented and the canvas's reaction to the additional paint and my methods of application (which include adding color directly from the container, mixing and applying with palette knives, or using the brush or rags to pull color). As I apply these broad fields of color, hints of the underlying areas shine through — this effect has been compared to the “fire in an opal” (art writer Rebecca Jones, Richmond). Again I scratch and scrape into the paint using various tools, building yet another layer of linework that interacts with those below. For some works, I will repeat one or more of the above processes to achieve the completed painting.

Throughout the studio process, I am neither acutely aware of physically applying paint to the canvas nor making concrete conscious decisions regarding color, shape, line, and texture. These decisions become reflexes and reactions to the medium, an autonomous process that rises as a bell curve and wanes as the painting nears its obvious completion. I liken this to channeling the painting, not through my mind, but through the very essence of myself. This finished work has the initial surface appearance of calmness, but quickly reveals a complex layering of color and texture; bright colors peer from beneath broad areas of white, dark tones give depth to the brighter tones applied over them. The textural quality is key to tying these many layers together, and it is this “writing” on the canvas that is a hallmark of my work, whether the pieces lean toward minimalism and formalism or contemporary abstract expressionism.

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SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- Cregger & Markhoff** | For Art's Sake Gallery | Henrico, Va. | April 26 – June 2, 2014
- Continuum** | Crossroads Art Center | Richmond, Va. | March 21 – May 9, 2014
- Shades of Passion** | Walton Gallery | Petersburg, Va. | June 22 – July 31, 2013
- Winter Group Show** | Appalachian Arts Center | Richlands, Va. | December 8, 2013 – February 4, 2014
- The New Direction of Color** | Aaron Gallery | Washington, DC | May 23, 2013
- Trilogy: Duane Cregger, Rodger Schultz, Tina Palmer** (Benefiting MedStar Thyroid Cancer Research) | The Woolly Mammoth | Washington, DC | April 22, 2013
- Three Visions of Expansion: Duane Cregger, Tina Palmer, Nia Tavlarides Stratos** | Aaron Gallery | Washington, DC | October 4, 2012
- Circle: New Work, 2012** | Crossroads Art Center | Richmond, Va. | September 21 – November 5, 2012
- Richmond Symphony Designer House 2012 at Pinifer Park** | Midlothian, Va. | September 10 – October 8, 2012
- All Media Show** ('Best in Show' Award) | Crossroads Art Center | Richmond, Va. | March – May 2012
- Where the Wild Things Are** | United Network for Organ Sharing | Richmond, Va. | January 6 – February 25, 2012
- New Work: 2011** | Capital One Headquarters | Richmond, Va. | September 5, 2011 – January 2, 2012
- New Work: 2011** | Crossroads Art Center | Richmond, Va. | May 20 – July 3, 2011
- New Work in Oil: 2010** | Arts Depot (20th Anniversary Spotlight Gallery) | Abingdon, Va. | June 6 – July 16, 2010
- A Series of New Work Inspired by the Baja Peninsula and Other Things** | William King Museum | Abingdon, Va. | December 2010 – January 2011
- Selected Works: Summer 2010** | Appalachian School of Law | Grundy, Va. | October 25 – December 10, 2010
- Selected Works: Summer 2010** | Elmes Gallery | Cedar Bluff, Va. | September 15 – October 25, 2010
- Summer Artist Marketplace** | Gallery Neptune | Bethesda, Md. | June 26 – August 21, 2010
- Selected New Works: 2009–2010** | ArtSpark at Innsbrook (Benefiting the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Children's Studio) | Richmond, Va. | April 22 – 24, 2010
- From These Hills: Contemporary Art in the Southern Appalachian Highlands** (Curated by Ray Kass) | William King Museum | Abingdon, Va. | October 22, 2009 – February 14, 2010
- Fall Group Show** | Terra Gallery | Columbus, Ohio | September 5 – October 2, 2009
- Cregger, Drymon, Minah** | Gallery Neptune | Bethesda, Md. | July 9 – August 15, 2009
- New Work: Oil on Canvas** | Crossroads Art Center | Richmond, Va. | July 8 – September 15, 2009
- re:Emerge, re:Connect, re:Create** | Artspace | Richmond, Va. | May 22 – June 21, 2009
- New Work: Oil on Canvas** | Appalachian Spirit Gallery | Marion, Va. | April 9 – May 1, 2009
- Selected Works in Oil, 2004–2008** | General Assembly Building | Richmond, Va. | January – March 2009
- First Works: 2004–2008** | Crossroads Art Center | Richmond, Va. | September 19 – October 18, 2008