



Two Worlds. 24 x 36 inches. Oil on Panel.

LEFT: This painting references the two worlds of land and sea touching at an uneven border, and suggests coastal erosion. Borderlands are “in a constant state of transition” and are the places where change occurs.



Where Waters of the Heart Push Their Tides. 36x36 inches. Acrylic on Canvas.

LEFT: We are not merely surrounded by water; it is the heart of who we are, and essential to our existence. We begin life protected by the water in our mother's wombs. 60% of our bodies is water. Each night, we exhale water into the air around us. When our hearts feel broken, salty wet tears overflow down onto our cheeks.

Heather Stivison is an award-winning artist whose work has been exhibited nationally and internationally in universities, galleries, and museums. Originally from New Jersey, Stivison spent nearly two decades as a museum professional, where among other titles, she served as executive director of the Stickley Museum at Craftsman Farms and the president of both the New Jersey Association of Museums and the Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums. She holds an MFA in painting, with Thesis of Distinction, from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

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SURROUNDED BY WATER

A SOLO EXHIBITION OF HEATHER STIVISON'S PAINTINGS



September 22 — October 16, 2021

307 Old Main St., South Yarmouth 02664 | cultural-center.org | 508-394-7100

SELECTED WORKS FROM THE EXHIBITION

The works in this exhibition stand on the threshold between representation and abstraction. They recognize that water is colorless and it has no shape of its own. What we see when looking at the ocean's surface is a combination of mirrors reflecting what is above, and windows to view what is inside and beneath. These patterns of mirrors and windows are the cues our brain uses to tell us that what we are looking at is water.

The ocean surface paintings are abstractions of these patterns. They explore the visual cues, rhythms, and sensibilities of ocean water. They question what elements are needed to recognize that the subject is water.

The ocean depth paintings explore what exists *inside* ocean water. Some things we can see with our eyes, such as seaweed and coral. Others we cannot see with our eyes—microbial activity, dissolved organic matter, metabolites, proteins, nutrients, and DNA. The abstractions describe the microscopic life of particular locations in the ocean. Several of the paintings have been inspired by a year-long partnership with a Noah Germolus—a Ph.D. candidate in Chemical Oceanography the MIT-WHOI Joint Program at Woods Hole.

Although some of the forms express visual characteristics of water, the focus is the exploration of light *on* the ocean and the unseen chemistry *within*. The paintings blend imagination and reality to reveal or provoke a new way of thinking about water.

SYNERGY PAINTINGS: These two paintings were inspired by Noah Paul Germolus' ongoing ocean chemistry research on two forces that compete for essential molecules in the upper ocean: the microbes that produce and consume these nutrients, and the ambivalent mechanisms of chemistry that alter or destroy them. Each is informed by high-resolution chemical measurements from a specific collection zone, as well as knowledge about the contemporaneous physical and microbial characteristics.



Coastal Surface: Communities. 48x60 inches. Acrylic and Oil on Canvas.

LEFT: Active water, full of movement, rich with vibrant mixtures of both land-derived molecules and oceanic molecules. An ever-changing mix of molecules, where nutrients are amplified by pollutants, pharmaceuticals, and other human activity.



Ocean Surface: Loneliness. 48x60 inches. Oil on Canvas.

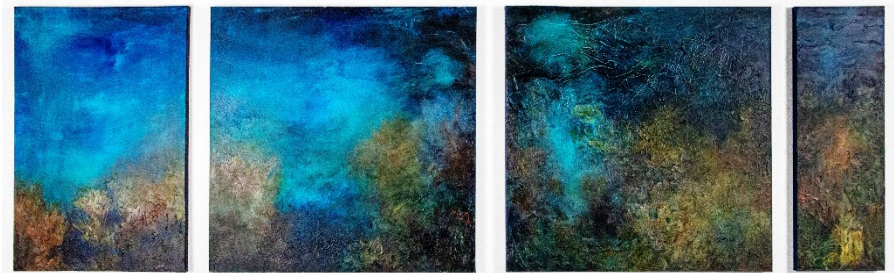
LEFT: Far out at sea, surface we rarely find the interrelated communities of activities found in coastal surface water. Molecules get used up, break down, and bleached out in the relentless sunlight, creating a sense of an "ocean desert."

OCEAN VASTNESS: These two paintings are from a series that respond to the vast power and scale of the ocean in relation to our human lives.



Finding the Eternal in the Everyday. 58 x 101 inches. Acrylic on Canvas.

ABOVE: Primarily painted with articles of domesticity—sponges, mesh onion bags, wooden spoons, make-up tools, whisks, and spatulas—this work references the everyday. And yet the subject matter is the deeper realm of the eternal oceans.



Beneath the Surface. 36 x 110 inches. Acrylic on Canvas.

ABOVE: A quadriptych (four-panel work of art) utilizing texture to suggest the "noise" and mystery beneath the ocean. Using water as a metaphor for "going deep" into a place in our mind—a place where we no longer can hear the barrage of news and jangle of daily minutia that assaults us. Instead, we float in the unknown mystery of our thoughts and memories, exploring places that can be dark and unsettling, or can fill us with new light.