

Testing

I call my primary body of work *Testing*, because each painting begins as an actual test. Inspired by scientific images like gel electrophoresis, they feature intimate views of materials reacting to each other, to light, and the passage of time. Instead of paint, I use my own complex formulas of deeply saturated inks, stains and dyes. Such colors can do things paint can't do – change, shift, and migrate through other layers of paint, or separate into component parts with differing properties.

Whereas traditional artist paints are formulated to be stable and controllable, stains are capricious and easily affected by lots of factors like humidity, gravity, time, UV light – even the structure of molecules in the other elements they touch. After years of study I'm still intrigued by the hidden chemistries of these materials. I write notations directly on the paintings to help me track what's happening in each test. These notes are one of the physical forms I use to display parallels between scientific and artistic exploration.

Like most painters I was educated to use archival materials and "proper" painting techniques. This practice was the original motivation behind a group of work I call *SunTests*. They started as a way of sorting out fugitive materials from those that are stable and lightfast. But instead of discarding such materials, I've found myself attracted to them, drawn by the additional layer of complexity that such changes suggest, and by the very notion of impermanence.

Time is not a dimension people usually think of for paintings. Even after you know about the testing process underpinning my work, it's tempting to view the paintings as static, frozen moments or phenomena captured in the acrylic film like bugs in amber. But they're actually slow-motion performances changing imperceptibly over time as the materials continue to interact. I design some colors to shift in hue or gradually disappear, while others remain permanent.

Whether the painting is large or small, you're meant to get up close. The lush matte surface and blurry, out-of-focus quality bring further attention to the effort of looking. Repetition is employed to compare & contrast, and to provide situations where unexpected mutations might occur.

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