

Christa Stephens Santa Fe, New Mexico

Artist Statement

My work describes relationship as a concept. Combining drawing, painting, and design techniques, I create explicitly structured paintings based on the interactive principles of contrast and unity. These compositions are improvised narratives; theoretical conversations between energy and matter that contemplate how different elements relate to one another, as well as the whole.

Simultaneously emotional and restrained, these works are largely composed of primary shapes and patterns that interact with a grid. To me, the grid represents the web of life. It is a playground where method intermingles with imagination. I'm fascinated by the associations that develop during this process and like to refer to my work as abstractometry or measured abstraction.

These paintings depict shallow space, but symbolize something deeper than surface meaning. Rather than being settled or conclusive, they are meditations on the correlations between human perceptions and the environments in which we live. In this reductive place, I find room for intricate inquiries about evolution, connectivity, and identity.

Biography

Christa Stephens grew up on the desert prairie of eastern New Mexico. After receiving a bachelor's degree in music, she pursued formal and non-formal studies in fine art and graphic design that ultimately led to a unique expression of these disciplines through her own visual language of geometric form and structure. Her vibrant, hard-edge abstractions draw upon the stark beauty of the high desert plains, and reflect her musical sensibilities of rhythm, dynamics, and tonality.

Working from her studio in Santa Fe, New Mexico, Christa engages in an investigative process of dismantling larger concepts into individual elements in order to see how the particles relate to one another. Then she reconfigures them into a new composition, using graphite or colored pencil to improvise relational patterns on a prepared substrate. Heavy body acrylic paint is custom mixed to create the bold, saturated color that is layered into this procedure multiple times, growing more intricate along the way. Sometimes, hand-painted collage papers and other media are added to the mix.

Christa has participated in juried exhibitions throughout the southwest since 2017 and received honors from the El Paso Art Association in El Paso, TX, the Lubbock Arts Alliance in Lubbock, TX, and the Taos Art Insurgency in Taos, NM. In 2020, she created and donated work benefitting the Santa Fe Dreamers Project, the Santa Fe Artists Medical Fund, and the Navajo Nation Covid-19 Relief Fund. Her work is included in private collections in the US and the UK.

Curriculum Vitae

Christa Stephens

b. 1967: Portales, NM

Lives and works in Santa Fe, NM

Exhibitions

2021

Harmonize (upcoming), Santa Fe Community Gallery, Santa Fe, NM
Color 2021: 4th Annual International Exhibition, 3 Square Art, Fort Collins, CO
That Which Surrounds You, Arts Benecia, Benecia, CA
Phenomenon: Contemporary Abstraction, Artist Alliance, Santa Fe, NM
Call of the Wild, San Fernando Valley Arts & Culture Center, Encino, CA
2020 Vision: Seeing Ourselves Through Challenging Times, Cabrillo Gallery, Aptos, CA
Starry Starry Night, Tubac Center of the Arts, Tubac, AZ
Reflections 20/20, Artists Council, Palm Springs, CA

2020

Fragments, Arc Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Museum from Home: The Resilience Project, 516 Arts, Albuquerque, NM
Holy Moly, 2020: The Year 'Til Now, Niza Knoll Gallery, Denver, CO
The Art of Being Alone: Artists in Quarantine, Museo de las Americas, Denver, CO
Taos Art Insurgency: The New Protagonists, Wilder Nightingale Fine Art, Taos, NM
Taos Art Insurgency: The New Protagonists, Dragonfly Blue Gallery, Taos, NM
The Second Half, Las Laguna Gallery, Laguna Beach, CA

2019

Biennial: Origins in Geometry, Museum of Geometric & Madi Art, Dallas, TX
Happy Little Clouds: Skyscapes of New Mexico, Santa Fe Community Gallery, Santa Fe, NM
Sync 10: Annual Juried Exhibition, Sync Gallery, Denver, CO
Taos Art Insurgency: The New Protagonists, Wilder Nightingale Fine Art, Taos, NM
Non-Objective Abstract National Exhibit, 3 Square Art, Fort Collins, CO
Sky's the Limit, New Mexico Art League, Albuquerque, NM
ABQ Art Showcase, Albuquerque Convention Center, Albuquerque, NM
Resolve/Evolve, Ghostwolf Gallery, Albuquerque, NM

2018

National Juried Open Show, Pirate Contemporary Art, Lakewood, CO
Taos Art Insurgency: The New Protagonists, Wilder Nightingale Fine Art, Taos, NM
Taos Art Insurgency: The New Protagonists, David Anthony Fine Art, Taos, NM
Taos Art Insurgency: The New Protagonists, Greg Moon Art, Taos, NM
Juried Gallery, 40th Annual Lubbock Arts Festival, Lubbock Memorial Civic Center, Lubbock, TX
The Shock of the New West, Tubac Center of the Arts, Tubac, AZ
Women's Work: Celebrating Women & Creativity, Ghostwolf Gallery, Albuquerque, NM
Biologique, New Mexico Art League, Albuquerque, NM

2017

50th Arts International Juried Exhibit, International Museum of Art, El Paso, TX
After: A Juried Exhibition, Studio & Gallery, Durango, CO
Small Works Holiday Show, New Mexico Art League, Albuquerque, NM
Patterns Art Exhibition, Light Space & Time Online Art Gallery
Twitter Art Exhibit, Stratford ArtsHouse, Stratford upon Avon, UK

Honors

2020 • Director's Choice Invitational, *Taos Art Insurgency: The New Protagonists*, Taos, NM
2018 • Third Place, *Juried Gallery, 40th Annual Lubbock Arts Festival*, Lubbock, TX
2017 • Honorable Mention, *50th Arts International Juried Exhibition*, International Museum of Art, El Paso, TX

Publications

2020 • Arc Gallery and Studios. *Fragments*. San Francisco: Independently Published.
2018 • Women in Art 278 Magazine: April Issue.
2017 • Stew Mosberg. *Mixing it Up*. The Durango Telegraph: April 13 Issue.

Memberships

Artist Alliance, Subscribing Member

Artists Council, Subscribing Member

Southwest Contemporary, Supporting Member

Education

2000-2020 • Studies with NM artists Lea Anderson, Nancy Reyner, Sam Scott, Darlene McElroy, Lee Rommel

2005-2011 • Studies at Pratt Institute, Corcoran School of the Arts & Design, Santa Fe Community College

1985-1990 • Bachelor of Music, Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, TX