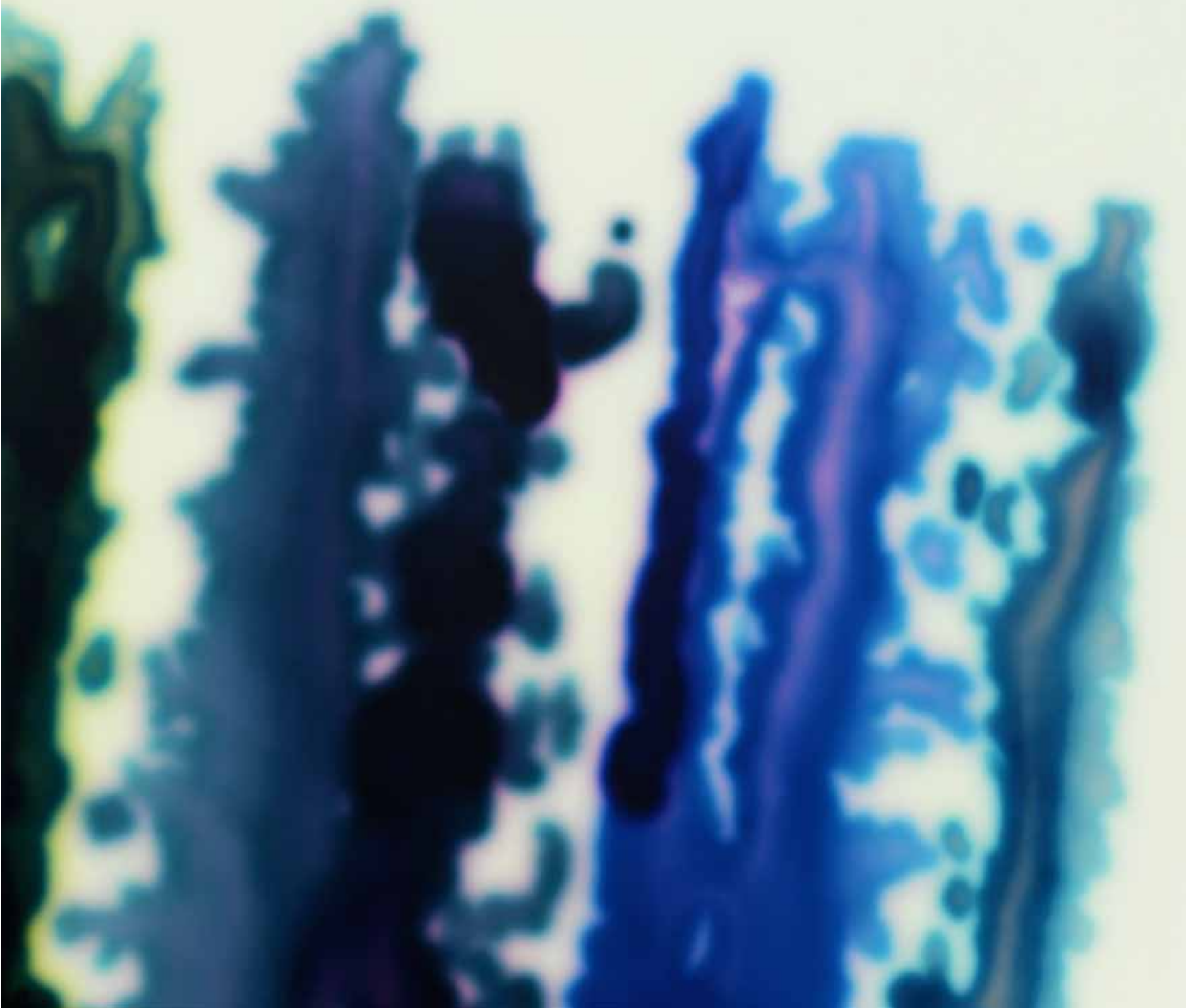


Jaq Chartier

SubOptic & UltraMarine: New Paintings & Drawings About the Sea



Disappearing Act: Jaq Chartier's Climate-Changing Paintings

by Erin Langner, Seattle Contributor, New American Paintings Blog



Stony Coral Landscape, 2013
acrylic, stains & spray paint on wood panel
11 x 14 inches

Jaq Chartier's paintings like to pose as objects other than paintings. The Seattle artist and cofounder of Aqua Art Miami is best known for *Testing*, an ongoing series that physically experiments with her materials and processes. Chartier integrates paint with saturated inks, stains and dyes she designs to evolve over time, creating large, hyper-saturated canvases that pulse with patterns and forms that reference the imagery of contemporary science — DNA strands, glass slides, microbodies — and ultimately behave as visual experiments themselves.

A similar consciousness persists in Chartier's newest series *SubOptic*, on view at Seattle's Platform Gallery, for which she reconfigures her processes for more traditional subject matter. Through allusions to cyanotypes of underwater flora by Anna Atkins, an early 19th century British artist and friend of photography pioneer Henry Fox Talbot, Chartier fuses the highly present concern of climate change with the historic sensibilities of scientific drawings and traditional landscape scenes. Designed to fade over time, *SubOptic* mirrors the fate of both the cyanotype reference points and the bleached corals the works portray, steeping the paintings in a deep sense of temporality. I caught up with the artist to find out more about the new direction for her work and the processes behind it.

Erin Langner: Both *SubOptic* and *Ultra Marine*, your show at Elizabeth Leach Gallery in Portland, OR earlier this year, take inspiration from coral reefs and their destruction due to climate change. Was there a particular incident or experience that instigated your interest in this subject?

Jaq Chartier: Something clicked when I first saw Al Gore's movie "An Inconvenient Truth." It filled me with dread for the magnitude and complexity of the problem of climate change. At the same time, the rich imagery resonated with my "art & science" inclinations. I wanted to explore this imagery in the studio, but I didn't see a way

*to integrate it with my *Testing* paintings. So it has been a slow-moving side project for a long time. This year, I finally decided to concentrate on the new series, just allowing it to exist as it's own thing, separate from *Testing*, and to see what happened. It didn't take long to realize that the overall topic of climate change was too big to take on all at once. I needed to find an approach that was focused and personal, and that turned out to be the forms and structures of corals.*

EL: I thought your use of coral is interesting in the way it can appear both as a very real, defined object and also as an amorphous abstraction that resonates as a broader, almost atmospheric sensation. You mention it as a more personal way to capture climate change, as well—how so?

JC: By personal, I was thinking about the studio — finding a way to transform the broad topic of climate change into my own aesthetic language. The simultaneously abstract and representational aspects of coral that you mention are precisely what attracted me to them as a subject. There's a tremendous diversity of forms within coral structure, and coral are often suggestive in that micro/macro way.

EL: Do you consider your work a form of activism, in terms of its bringing attention to environmental issues?

JC: Maybe activism-lite. I don't mean to trivialize what I'm doing; it's just that I still have so much to learn about the issues. Right now, the process of making the paintings is drawing me closer to the subject, and I'm just following my curiosity.

EL: Your earlier *Testing* series integrates scientific imagery, such as DNA charts and microscope slides, with the physical testing of materials you orchestrate through the stains and formulas you combine with conventional paint mediums; this

feels like a highly original process. Your newer work relates more overtly to traditional painterly imagery, such as landscapes and maps. Was this a conscious shift in your practice or do you see the two bodies of work as continuous?

JC: I don't see them as continuous. I'm using the same materials for the new paintings, but otherwise the two bodies of work seem to be on separate tracks for now. I haven't given up the Testing series, as I love exploring color and the interactions of the materials. Those paintings are stripped down to very specific rules; each painting must be an actual test of some kind, and every element has to be there for a reason which supports the test. The newer paintings are a more traditional kind of picture making, and it's a refreshing counterpoint which I seem to need right now, to open the process again.

EL: The stains you create and utilize in your paintings are designed to change over time. Are you at a point in your practice that you can anticipate the forms those changes will take, or do you still experience surprises?

JC: The paintings in SubOptic will change in subtle ways over time to reflect the problem of coral bleaching, but in this case it won't be anything dramatic. I can make paintings that completely disappear, (such as the piece I documented in a video titled "Sun Test: Time Lapse"), but that wasn't my goal here. The idea of change is a place where the two bodies of work can overlap, and I'm sure I will be exploring that more over the next few years.

And yes, I'm still surprised every day by these materials. While I'm making each piece, throughout all the layers and various steps in the process, I'm holding an image of the painting in my head which I know can only be an approximation of the final result. Each time, after I've applied the final coating of white acrylic medium, I walk away never sure what I'll see when I return the next day. It's like waiting for a Polaroid photo to develop. There's a period of time when it's just a field of white, wet mystery and anything could happen.

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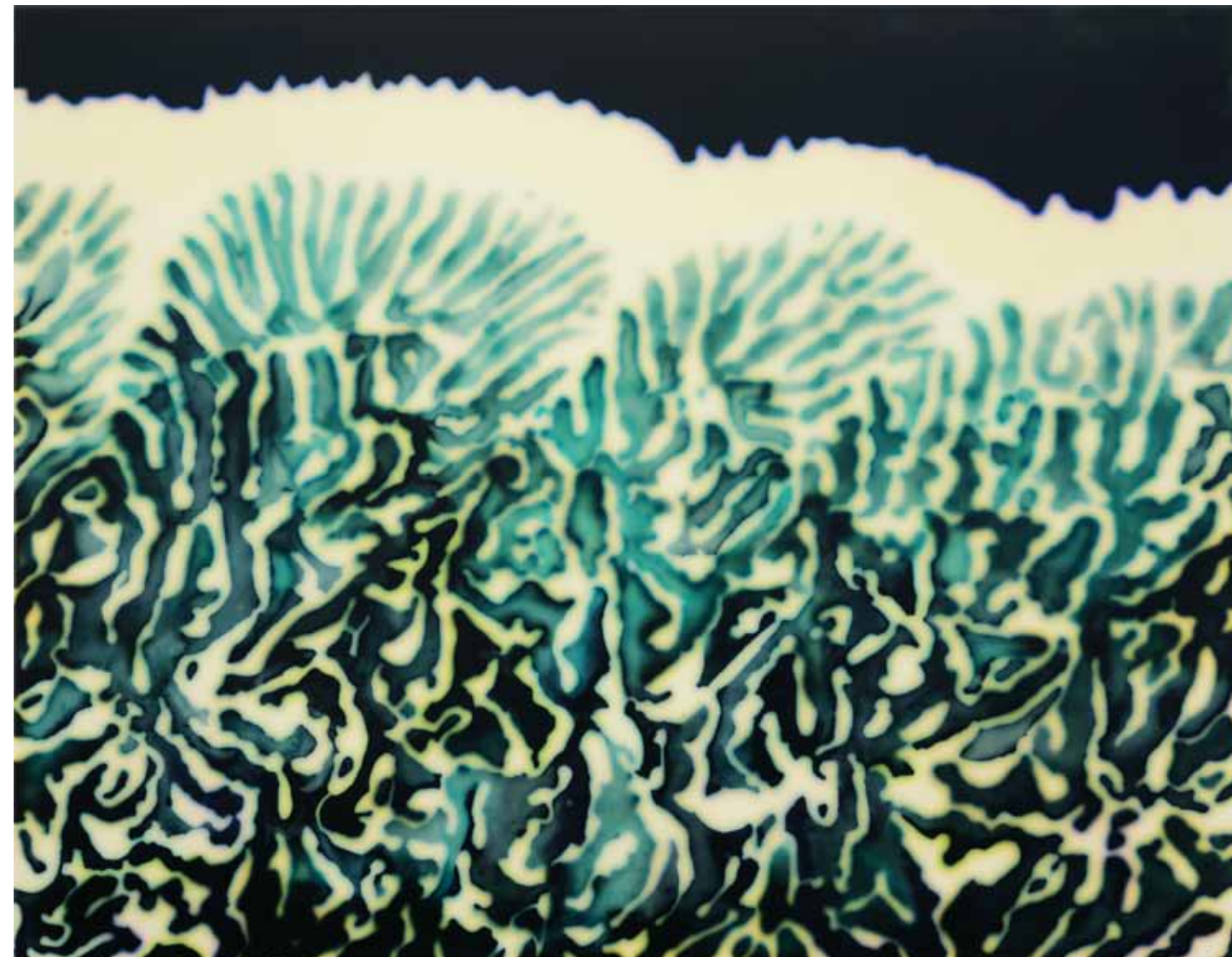
Core Sample, 2013
acrylic, stains & spray paint on wood panel
24 x 18 inches





Coralline (bleaching), 2013
acrylic, stains & spray paint on wood panel
28 x 36 inches

Montipora Edge, 2013
acrylic, stains & spray paint on wood panel
28 x 36 inches



Golden Coral, 2013
acrylic, stains & spray paint on wood panel
42 x 32 inches



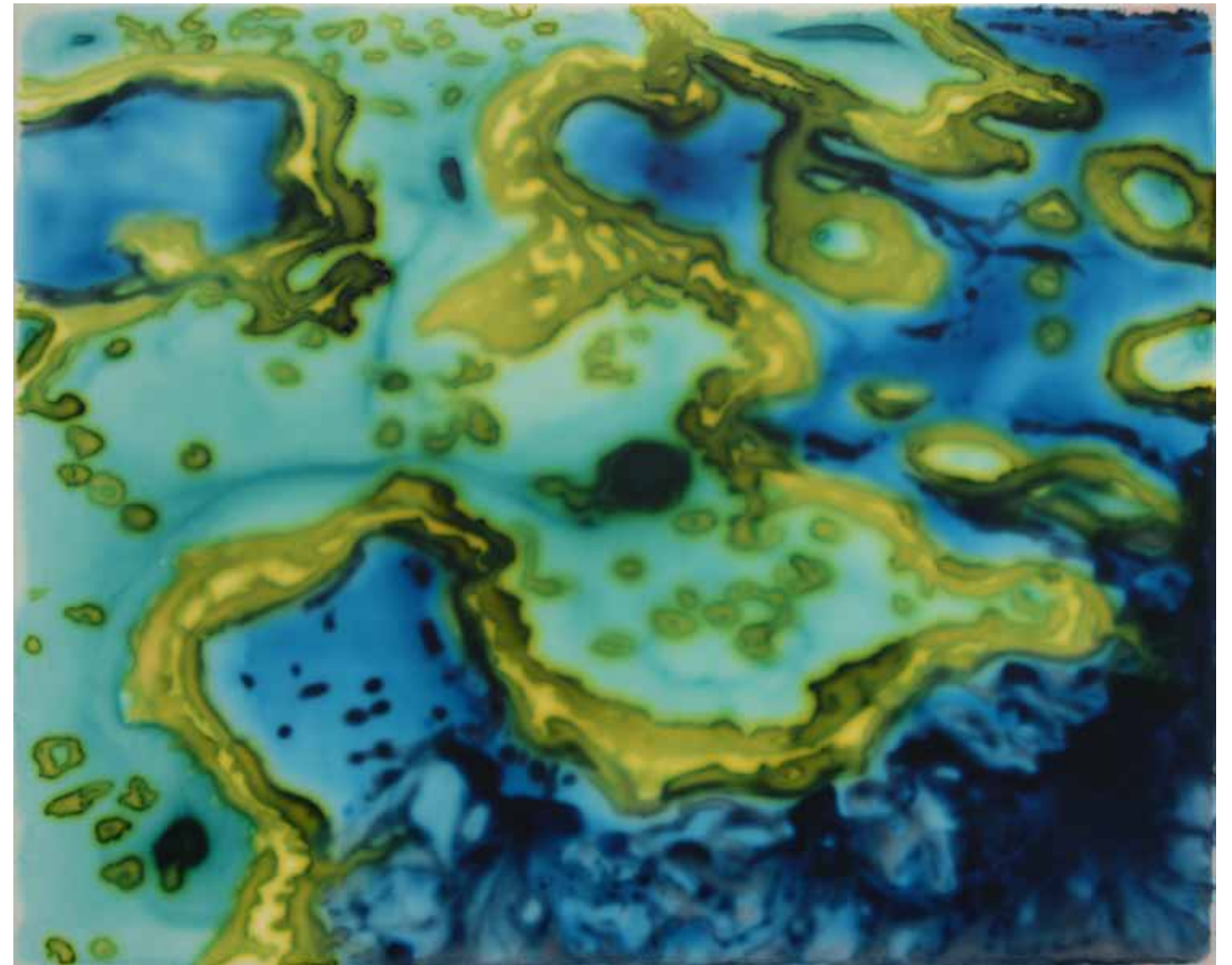
Bloom, 2013
acrylic, stains & spray paint on wood panel
40 x 50 inches



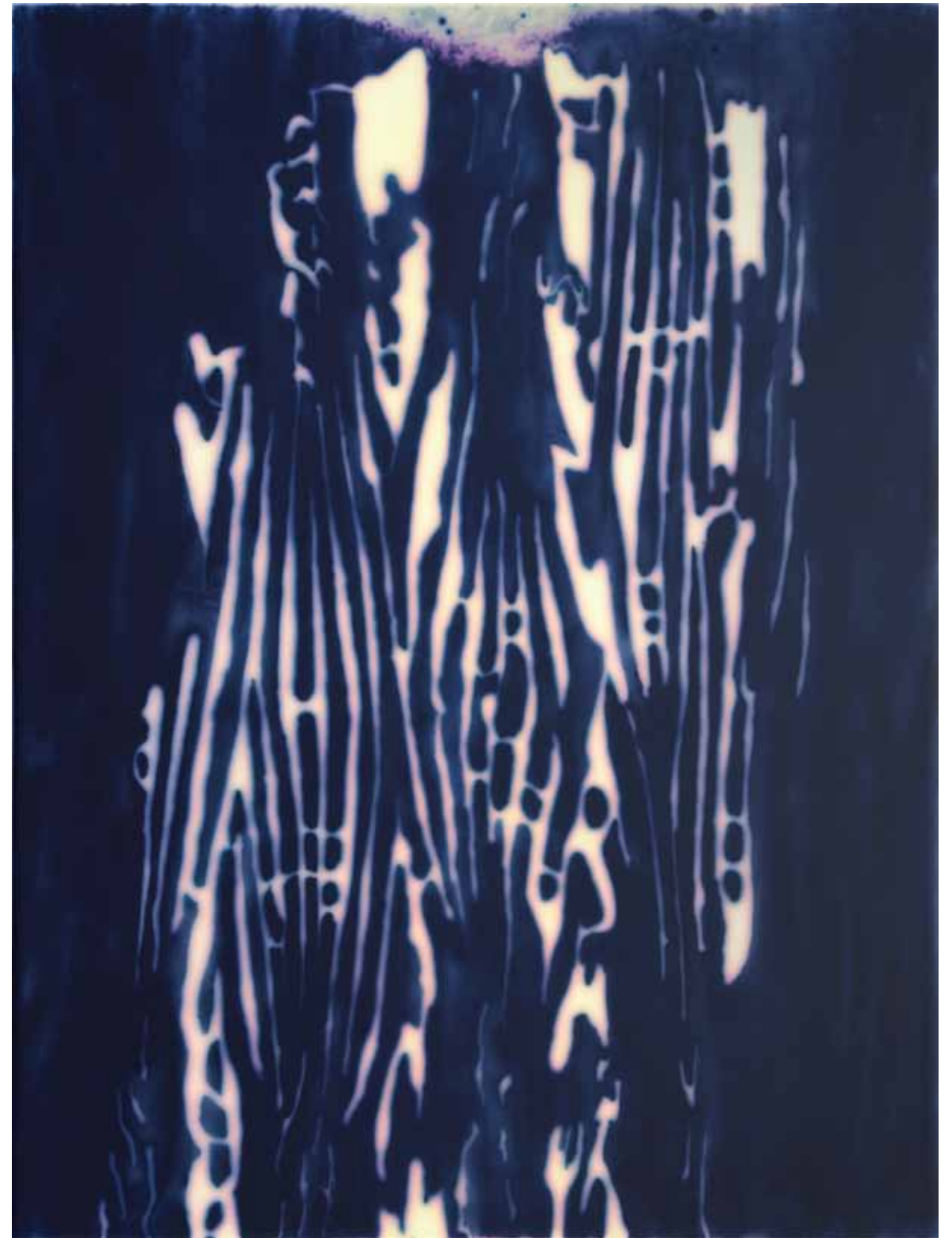
Floater, 2013
acrylic, stains & spray paint on wood panel
32 x 44 inches

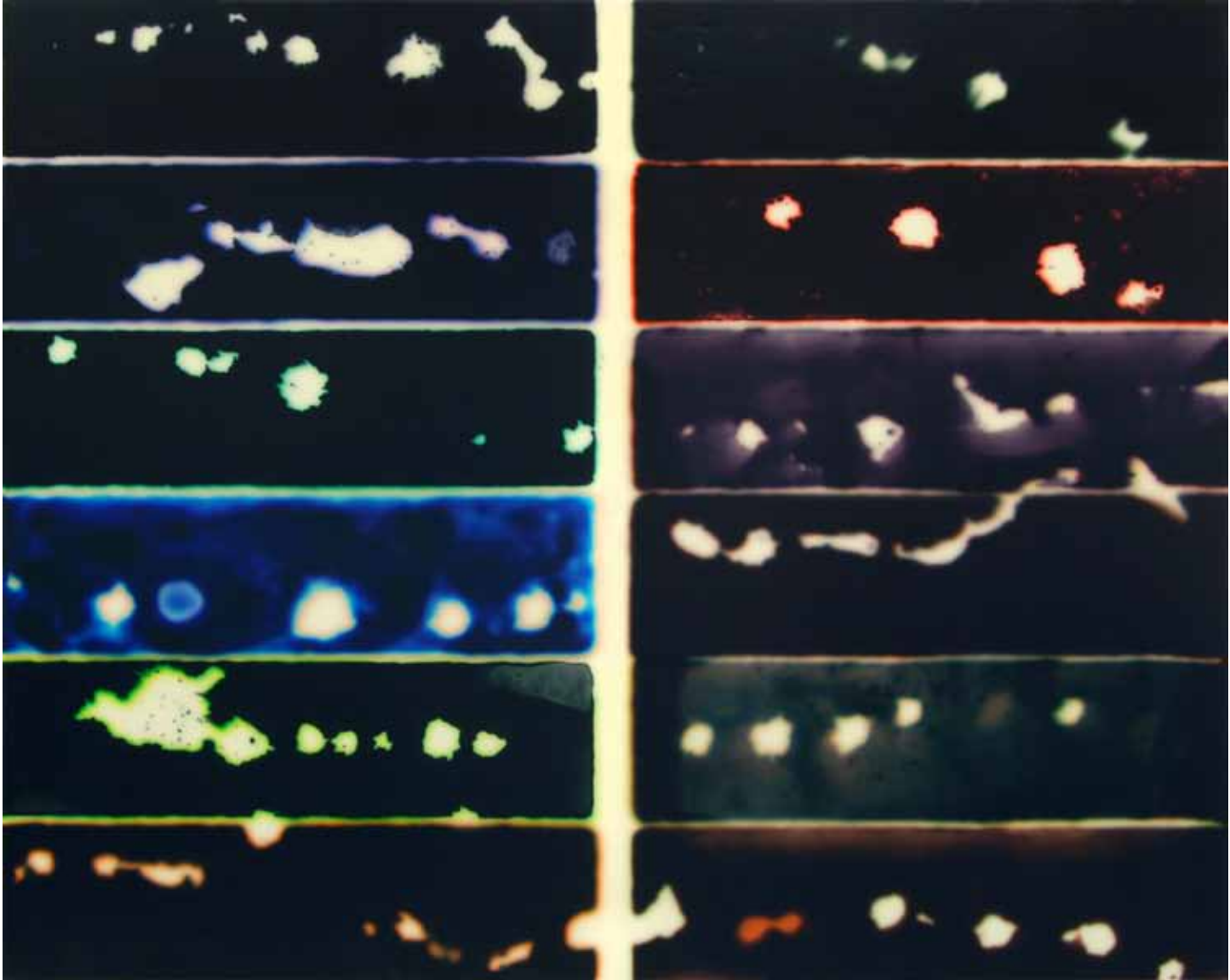


Great Barrier Reef, 2013
acrylic, stains & spray paint on wood panel
24 x 30 inches



Sample w/Blue 6b, 2013
acrylic, stains & spray paint on wood panel
24 x 18 inches





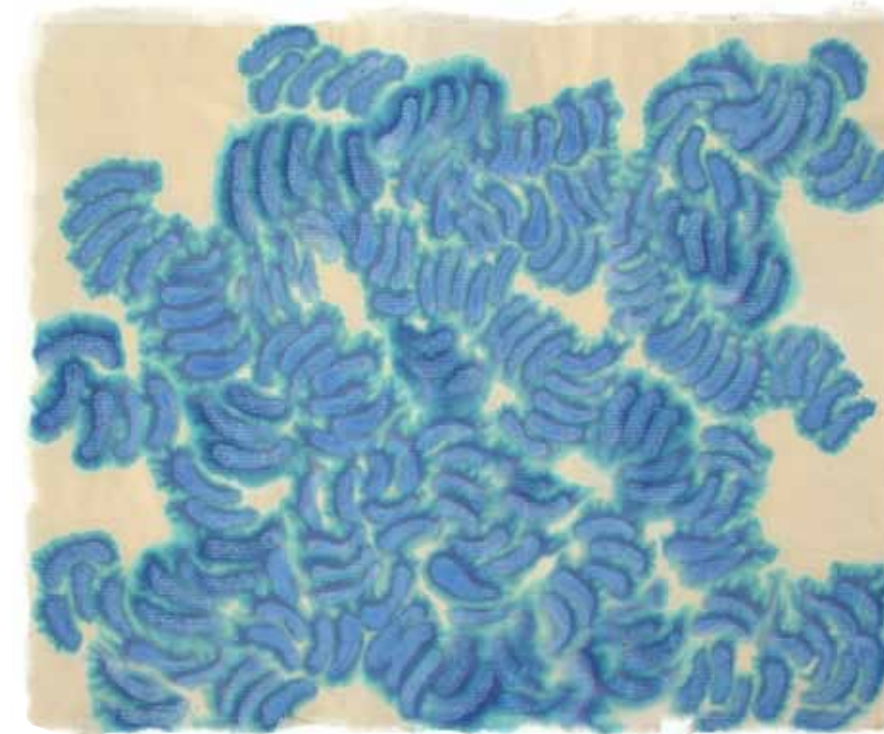
12 Samples, 2012
acrylic, stains & spray paint on wood panel
40 x 50 inches

Cluster w/BG4, 2013
acrylic, stains & spray paint on wood panel
20 x 16 inches





SubOptic installation at Platform Gallery, Seattle, September 2013.



untitled drawings, 2013, approximately 8 x 10 inches each
iridescent acrylic, phosphorescent medium, ink & stains on paper

Solo Exhibitions

- 2013 *Ultra Marine: New Paintings & Drawings About the Sea*, Elizabeth Leach Gallery, Portland
SubOptic, Platform Gallery, Seattle
- 2011 *Slow Color*, Morgan Lehman Gallery, New York
- 2010 *SuperNatural*, Elizabeth Leach Gallery, Portland
- 2009 *Downtime*, Platform Gallery, Seattle, WA
- 2008 *Color Charts*, Haines Gallery, San Francisco
Full Spectrum, Elizabeth Leach, Portland
Testing, William Baczek Fine Arts, Northampton MA
- 2007 *Color Tests*, Schroeder Romero, New York
- 2006 *Testing*, University of Michigan, Inst. for the Humanities, Ann Arbor
Blindsight, Platform Gallery, Seattle
- 2005 *Testing*, Elizabeth Leach, Portland
Testing, LIMN Gallery, San Francisco
- 2004 *Testing*, Schroeder Romero, Brooklyn
Testing, LIMN Gallery, San Francisco
- 2003 *Testing*, Schroeder Romero, Brooklyn
New Work, William Traver Gallery, Tacoma, WA
- 2002 *Testing*, Frumkin/Duval, Santa Monica
Testing, LIMN Gallery, San Francisco
Testing, Cervini Haas, Scottsdale
- 2001 *Testing*, William Traver Gallery, Seattle
- 2000 *Testing*, Cervini Haas, Scottsdale
- 1998 *Testing*, William Traver Gallery, Seattle
- 1997 *New Work*, Laura Russo, Portland
New Work, William Traver Gallery, Seattle
- 1996 *New Work*, William Traver Gallery, Seattle
- 1995 *Introductions*, William Traver Gallery, Seattle

Collections

Amgen, Seattle
City of Seattle, Portable Works Collection
The Microsoft Collection
The Progressive Art Collection
Rosetta Inpharmatics
Seattle Public Utilities, Portable Works Collection
Swedish Medical Center, Seattle
Tacoma Art Museum, Tacoma WA
USAA, Seattle
Wellington Management

Awards & Grants

- 2013 Purchase Award, Seattle Public Utilities Portable Works Collection
- 2011 Contemporary Northwest Art Awards finalist, Portland Art Museum
- 2009 Purchase Award, City of Seattle Portable Works Collection
- 2006 Neddy Fellowship Award nominee, Behnke Foundation, Seattle
- 2005 Neddy Fellowship Award nominee, Behnke Foundation, Seattle
- 2004 Special Projects Grant, 4Culture, Seattle
Visual Arts Grant finalist, Creative Capital Foundation, NY
- 2002 Artist Trust/WA State Arts Commission Fellowship, Seattle
- 2001 PONCHO Special Recognition Award, administered by the Betty Bowan Award Committee, Seattle Art Museum
Joan Mitchell Foundation Award nominee, New York
- 1999 Artist Trust GAP Grant (Grants for Artists' Projects), Seattle
Betty Bowan Award Finalist, Seattle Art Museum
Centrum Residency, Port Townsend, WA
Neddy Fellowship Award nominee, Behnke Foundation, Seattle

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2013 *Chamber Music*, Frye Art Museum, Seattle
Materialized, Robischon Gallery, Denver
Atmospheric Weather: Artwork from Seattle Public Utilities Collection, Seattle Municipal Tower, Seattle
- 2012 *Elles @ SAM Gallery*, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle
- 2011 *One Thing Leads To Another*, San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art
Seattle As Collector, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle
- 2010 *Default State Network*, Morgan Lehman Gallery, New York
The Power of Selection, part 3, Western Exhibitions, Chicago
Northwest Mid-Career Artists, Seattle Public Utilities Portable Works, Seattle Municipal Tower Gallery
- 2009 *Genipulation: Genetic Engineering & Manipulation in Contemporary Art*, CentrePasqueArt, Kunsthaus Centre d'art, Biel/Bienne, Switzerland
- 2008 *Genesis – The Art of Creation*, Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern, Switzerland
- 2007 *Diagnose [Art]: Contemporary Art Reflecting Medicine*, Museum im Kulturspeicher, Würzburg, Germany [catalog]
Human Nature II: Future Worlds, School of Fine Arts Gallery, Indiana University, Bloomington [catalog]
A Gathering of Friends, inaugural exhibition, Golden Foundation for the Arts Gallery, New Berlin, NY
- 2006 *Diagnosis [Art]: Contemporary Art Reflecting Medicine*, Kunst Museum Ahlen, Germany; and the Museum im Kulturspeicher, Würzburg, Germany [catalog]

- 2005 *Neddy Fellowship Exhibition*, Tacoma Art Museum, Tacoma, WA
- 2003 *Portals*, Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts, Grand Rapids, MI
Components, Elizabeth Leach Gallery, Portland, OR
- 2002 *Gene(sis): Contemporary Art Explores Human Genomics*, Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle. The show travelled through 2004: Berkeley Art Museum, UC Berkeley, CA; Weisman Art Museum, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis; and the Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL
- 2000 *4 x 4: Four Decades of University of Washington Alumni*, Jacob Lawrence Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle
- 1998 *Hands On Color*, Bellevue Art Museum, Bellevue, WA

Selected Bibliography

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- 2012 Beal, Suzanne. "Seattle: A Celebration of Elles," art ltd magazine, Nov/Dec, p. 42, (image).
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- 2010 *Studio Visit, Vol. 10*, Needham Heights, Mass.: Open Studio Press, pp.36-37.
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Reichle, Ingeborg. *Art in the Age of Technoscience: Genetic Engineering, Robotics, and Artificial Life in Contemporary Art*, Austria: Springer Wien New York. pp. 237-241, (images).
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- 2006 Pence, Elizabeth. "Jaq Chartier at Platform Gallery," *Artweek*, November, pp. 22-23 (image).
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- 2005 Koplos, Janet. "Report from Seattle: Plugged In and Caffeinated," *Art in America*, September, p.69, (image).
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Maine, Stephen. "Dateline Brooklyn," *Artnet.com*, 9/30/04, (image).
Shaviro, Steven. "Genetic Disorder," *Artforum*, Jan, p. 42, (image).
Stillman, Nick. "Jaq Chartier: Sun Tests," *MinusSpace.com*, Nov, (image).
Wiggin, A. "The Art of Science," *Seattle Magazine*, May, p. 30, (image).
- 2003 Bullis, Douglas. *100 Artists of the West Coast*. Atglen, Pa.: Schiffer Books. Images pp. 172-173.
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Lovejoy, Bess. "Weird Science: Art and Chemistry Collide in the Lab of Jaq Chartier," *Resonance Magazine*, no. 38, pp. 32-33, (images).
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Roth, Charlene. "Jaq Chartier," *Artweek*, March, p. 17, (image).
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- 1995 *Foo Fighters*. Capitol Records/Roswell Records. Images on CD & album.

Education

1994 MFA, painting, University of Washington, Seattle
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