

ENERGY LANDSCAPES

PAYSON R. STEVENS

1970s - 2009

SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE ART GALLERY, SAN DIEGO CALIFORNIA
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ARTIST'S STATEMENT

I have studied both art and science with both informing my ways of seeing the world. These very separate disciplines have some things in common, as they interpret the world around us. The scientist looks for patterns that help explain the natural world (and for better or worse our control of it). The artist seeks to interpret or reinterpret other kinds of visual patterns that give us a different view of our experience of being. I have been fortunate to have spent extensive time in Nature, including the California Mountains and deserts, Baja Mexico, the Southwest, Alaska, Antarctica, and the Indian Himalayas: doing field research, or with a sketch book, or painting *en plein air*.

For forty years my work has been to understand the patterns, experience their energy, and express them. The science communication was concerned with making concepts about nature and our planet more meaningful especially through the application of remote sensing and studying the earth from space (with computer technologies playing a large and important role). The paintings and drawings require little technology (a brush, a pencil, pigment, some canvas or paper) but like looking at satellite and Space Shuttle views, they touch the inner plane. They are interpretations of the alternating micro and macrocosms that envelope us all, allowing our gaze to shift from the small, intense details to the grandeur of majestic spaces. These energy flows of the natural world have rhythms that transcend the timescale of the individual human experience and the pulses of the Earth.

Critics may help us to understand creative work within some contemporary or historical context and that may add to the intellectual appreciation of art. But ultimately any attempts to explain any artwork don't matter things click or they don't (although the time frame for that can change). Over the course of 40 years I've moved between art and science and explored many ways of interpreting these worlds. Whether working with canvas and paint or pixels and a mouse, still or moving imagery, whether on the cutting edge of computer technology in the 1980s, or returning to the simplicity of a pencil and sketchbook, I've been receptive to the changes around me.

If I can impart anything that I have learned on my path it is: stay true to your personal vision. Whatever excites you is a good indication that something true is resonating with your higher self. Be open to the unexpected and know that things constantly change. Flexibility coming from an awareness of constant change is one of the laws of Nature. If anyone had told me at the height of my professional career that I would have ended up living half the year in a remote Indian Himalayan village I would have laughed. But it happened at age 57 and the last eight years have been some of the most exciting of my life. So, embrace what moves and inspires you: they are the fuel that stokes the fires of your life. Then the gift of flowing energy will be yours.