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A Conversation with Danielle Eubank on the Occasion of her Exhibition, "Ripple Effect", at the Pamela Walsh Gallery, by James Scarborough

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March 16, 2024

needed discussion of the complex interplay between water as both motif and metaphor within the environmental discourse. This exhibition, an extension of her "One Artist Five Oceans" series, examines the nuanced relationship between humanity and water, focusing on the San Francisco Bay area's aquatic ecosystems. Poised between abstraction and realism, her work challenges conventional representations of water, reflecting her evolving methodology and innovative use of material. Through "Ripple Effect," she underscores the role of art to address ecological crises, specifically, water pollution and conservation issues. The exhibition testifies to art's ability to foster environmental awareness and stimulate action. She leverages her work to articulate a critical perspective on anthropogenic

Danielle Eubank's "Ripple Effect," on show at the Pamela Walsh Gallery, contributes to a

impacts, advocating for a reevaluation of our interactions with natural bodies of water. By integrating innovative techniques and environmentally conscious materials, "Ripple Effect" reminds us of the urgency for environmental stewardship. Her practice shows the transformative power of art in the environmental movement, emphasizing the imperative for collective and institutional responsibility towards ecological conservation and

sustainability. **JS**: Could you share the theoretical foundations that informed "Ripple Effect"? How does this body of work engage with and expand upon the environmental discourse established in your "One Artist Five Oceans" project? **DE**: In One Artist Five Oceans, I sailed and painted all the oceans on the planet to talk

about climate change. I showed the similarity in the oceans, and also discussed the way different oceans have different personalities.

I have incorporated all of the ideas from One Artist Five Oceans in Ripple Effect, on show at Pamela Walsh Gallery in Palo Alto, California. I am beginning to study the San Francisco Bay in the same way that I have been studying the world's oceans. One of the great things that One Artist Five Oceans taught me was how to express being in an ocean, rather than observing one. By the end of the series, my work started to become more colorful and

experimental. This is because by the end of the series I was describing the way the water makes me feel. I went beyond documenting it and became part of it. JS: In what ways has your artistic practice evolved to incorporate both the abstract and the real within the thematic confines of water, particularly in the context of this exhibition? **DE:** I have a natural tendency towards abstraction. I get great satisfaction out of painting something exactly how it looks. However, after doing that a few times my work starts to

become more abstract. I think what happens is that I loosen up and start thinking about the emotions that I want the viewer to feel. This becomes evident in the paintings. **JS:** "Ripple Effect" weaves together visual allure and an urgent environmental message.

your works? **DE:** For me, it's not a tension, but rather two integral parts of a whole. When talking about water, I am also talking about the way the world functions, the way animals live. The way plants and humans live. I am talking about the way we are interconnected. I am talking about the way we treat each other. I am also talking about the beauty of the world and all the richness in it.

How do you negotiate the tension between aesthetic appeal and ecological advocacy in

I want people to really observe water. I want them to think about it. And I think that means thinking about all parts of it. If people think deeply about water, then a lot of my ecological advocacy has been achieved. It's a catalyst to creating passion which can lead to action, the ultimate goal. **JS:** Could you discuss the innovations in technique and materiality that characterize the

artworks in "Ripple Effect"? How do these choices enhance the thematic concerns and

overall reception of your work?

surface tension that water has.

and environmental conservation?

west, and north areas.

water.

environmental themes?

guidelines on their website.

such as environmental degradation, into their work?

DE: In Ripple Effect, I am working with the liquid physical medium of oil paint in a way to make my subject matter, water, look more liquid. I am treating the paint as a part of the image, rather than as a way to describe the image. I think this gives more depth to the paintings, more nuance in the way the colors and surface areas are treated. I scratch into the surface, especially in paintings of polluted water. I use rough paint and scumble it on top to create texture. I'm also smoothing out areas so that they show the glass-like

JS: Considering the intersection of art and environmental science in your work, how do

you perceive the role of art in fostering a deeper public engagement with climate change

DE: Deeper public engagement can be catalyzed in lot of different ways. Maybe people

or talk to their families and friends about what's happening in the world. In all of these

see a documentary or have a great professor, read a terrific book, go to an art exhibition,

examples what happens is that people start to feel more passionate about the world around them. How does one create passion? I don't know. But one thing is for sure, if one observes the natural world around them and thinks about it, they are more likely to develop a strong relationship with it, a passion. Maybe through my work someone will notice something about water that they have never noticed before. Perhaps next time they are at the beach

they spend more time following the way waveforms are created. Maybe they'll look up

what kind of sea creatures and plants live there. This kind of engagement can lead to

genuine passion. JS: The exhibition highlights specific sites within the San Francisco Bay area as sources of inspiration. How have these locales and their communities influenced the conceptual and aesthetic development of "Ripple Effect"? **DE:** I have chosen three areas in the San Francisco Bay to begin with: Alameda Island, the Charleston Slough in Palo Alto, and the Petaluma River, roughly representing the east,

Alameda Island has been changed wildly since the Spanish arrived in 1769. Originally it

was a peninsula of marshes and oak trees and home to the Ohlone. It was built up and cut

off from the land to form an island. Eventually a naval air station was built there. It closed

in the 1990s and that area is gradually getting turned into houses. There are 25 Superfund

sites on Alameda Island. I have been exploring the salt ponds around Palo Alto. They were built to supply gold miners for the California Gold Rush. Some of the salt ponds are getting rehabilitated into the salt marshes that they once were. This is a massive success. They are rich and interesting places with avocet, sandpipers, egrets, ducks, and other birds.

The Petaluma River feeds the Bay from the north. It runs south into the Bay and has

supplied the Bay Area with goods from Sonoma County since General Vallejo's time, and

All three places that I have chosen to paint for Ripple Effect have rich, historical context,

probably before, when the Coast Miwok lived there. It's also close to where I am from.

are relevant today, and have environmental as well as social features. **JS:** Since the opening of "Ripple Effect," what have been some noteworthy reactions or engagements from the audience that have impacted your perception of the exhibition's success or its broader implications? **DE:** I am delighted every time someone relates a memory about one of the areas where I

have painted. It's a thrill to learn historical, cultural, or ecological context from people

who live there. It's an exchange that we get to have that starts by talking about art and

JS: After "Ripple Effect", what do you envision for your work, especially regarding

DE: I am going to continue painting the Bay, especially Superfund sites. I'm also painting other Superfund sites around the country. JS: What advice would you offer to emerging artists who want to integrate global issues,

DE: Choose something you like and give it a go. If you are interested in native species and

For me, engaging people has been the most rewarding. Think about the best way you can

gardening, then talk about it. If you are interested in glaciers and CO2, talk about that.

engage others. By the way, it isn't just for artists! Anyone with interests in the environment can do something. Maybe this means telling a story, providing facts, asking lots of questions, or cleaning beaches. Whatever works for you and keeps you motivated is the right thing to do.

JS: In your view, what responsibilities do galleries and art institutions bear in promoting

DE: I would like to see all businesses think about their climate impact and uses of plastic

and engaging with environmental issues, as exemplified by exhibitions like "Ripple Effect"?

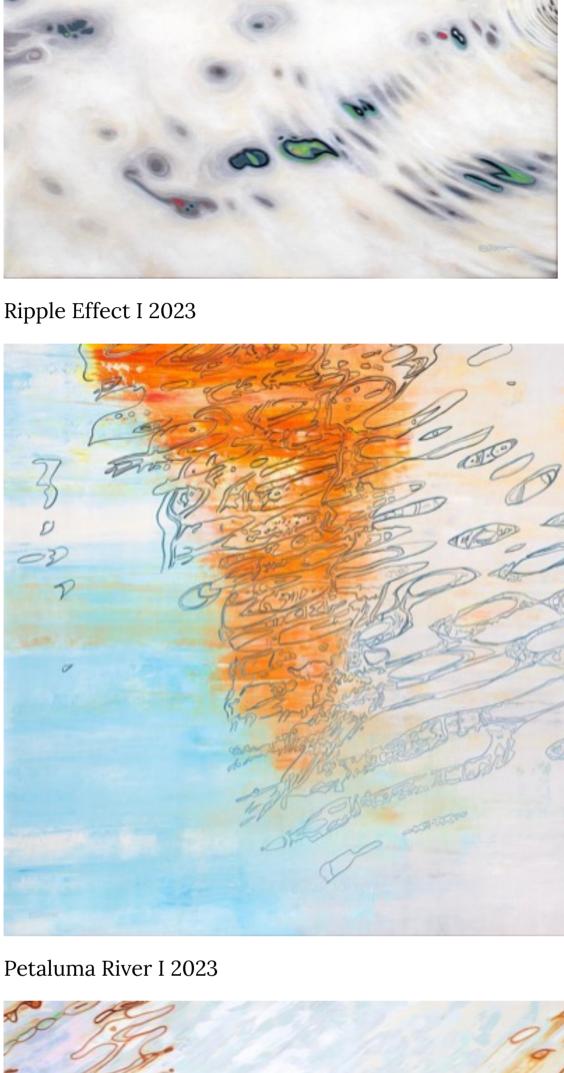
through the entire cycle of their work. For example, let's say a company raises pastured cows and produces organic, pasture-raised yogurt. That's terrific for the land, the cows, the air, and the local economy. If they're selling their yogurt in plastic containers that release masses of CO2 in their production, and never fully decompose into healthy soil,

doesn't that contradict some of the good that they have done? Think about the entire

galleries, I suggest checking out the Gallery Climate Coalition. There are some useful

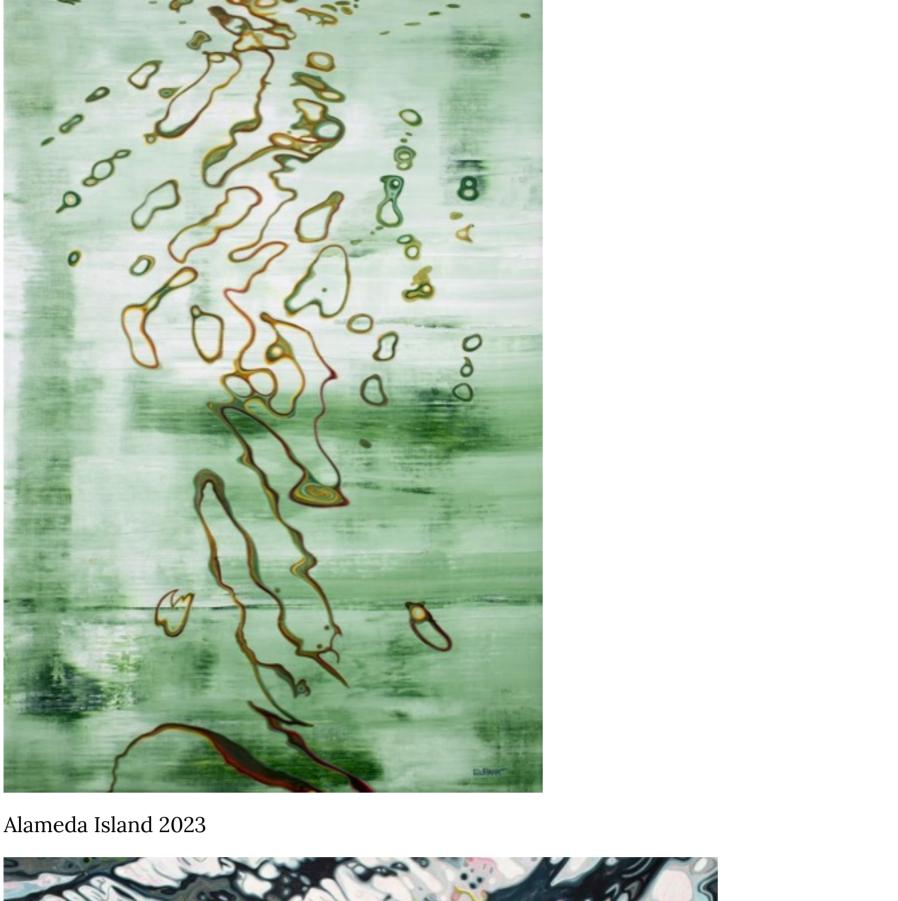
No business is going to do it all perfectly, but thinking about the entire chain is smart. For

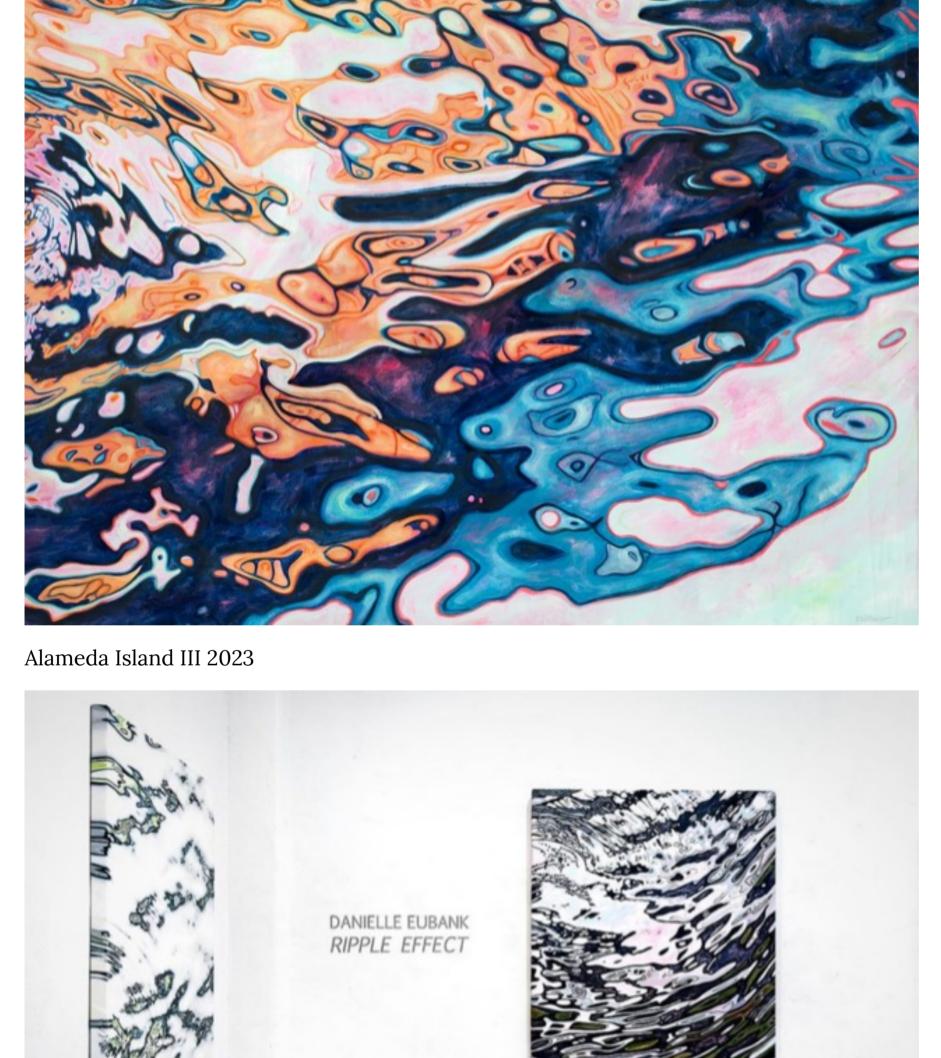
chain of the business, including after its products are with customers.





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The exhibition runs through April 27, 2024. The gallery is located at 540 Ramona Street, Palo Alto CA. For more information, click here. Posted at 01:33 PM in Art, Conversations | • Permalink

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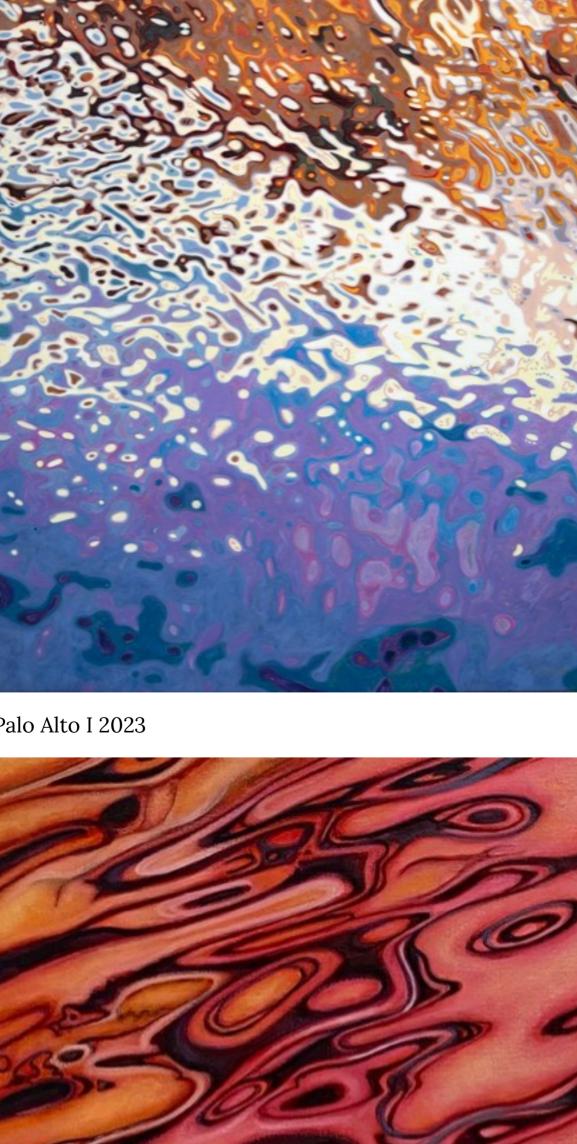
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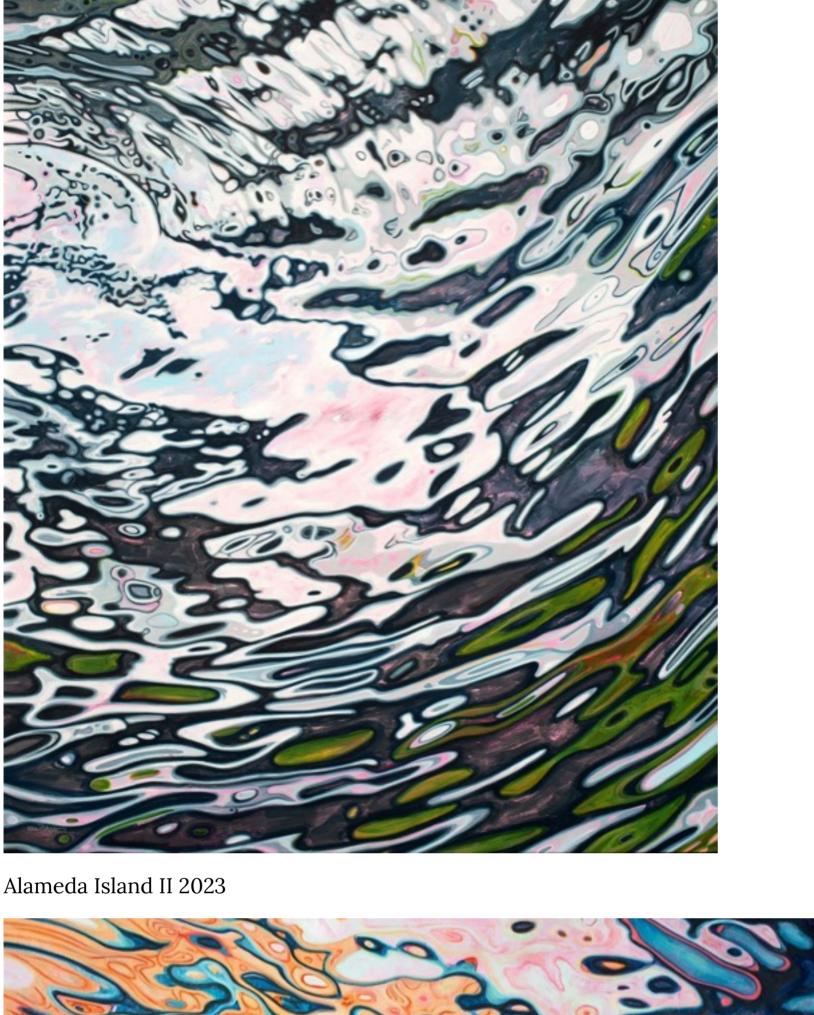
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