



Solo Exhibition Grants Pass Museum of Art July 20–August 27, 2010

229 SW G Street, Grants Pass, Oregon 97526
www.gpmuseum.com • (541) 479-3290
Tuesday through Saturday • 12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

DIRECTED CHAOS



Randy Johnson studied art at Florida State University. Among his early influences in Tallahassee were artists Robin Rose, Phil Hunt, Joe Johnson, Ron Jones, and three art professors: Ray Burggraf, Steve Pressler, and Trevor Bell.

He was interested in the popular illustrators of the 1970s: Peter Max, Roger Dean (whose work many believe inspired the floating islands of Pandora in the movie *Avatar*), and Rick Griffin (*Zap Comix*, Grateful Dead album covers). But what Johnson loved most was abstract art, working with pure color, line, and composition without representational content. He was attracted to new media, working in the 1970s with sprayed and dripped lacquers on Plexiglas. In 1973, those large paintings on acrylic sheet were exhibited in the *Young Men in Art* show, curated by John Streetman, at the Polk Public Museum in Lakeland, Florida.

Johnson also had an affinity for the natural world, and he worked for 20 years photographing, drawing, and painting wildlife. He was the art director, and then the editor, for the State of Florida's *GEOJOURNEY* magazine, and designed the illustrations for the Department of Natural Resources' *Save the Manatee* program (which enlisted singer-songwriter Jimmy Buffett as its spokesman). In the 1980s, he gained notoriety for designing *Red Tail Ale* and other beer labels for the Mendocino Brewing Company in California. Other wildlife pieces were featured by Rainforest Action Network, the Jane Goodall Institute, and The Nature Company. He won the Impressions Award for screen printing in 1998. In 1999, it was his red-tailed hawk beer label that led to a commission to illustrate *The Gift of Birds*, a book edited by Larry Harbegger and Amy Carlson that featured a short story by Alice Walker.

In 1997, Johnson began experimenting with the chaotic mixing, scuffing, and blending of viscous acrylic paints. He found the spontaneous paint-

ing with bold colors exhilarating, and then discovered jewel-like compositions within the larger chaotic fields. To his surprise, he found that within the layers of his paint films there appeared patterns that resembled those found in the natural world. His love of flora, fauna, geology, and meteorology had merged with his passion for making art. After a pivotal discussion with Ashland, Oregon, artist Thomy Barton, Johnson decided to use the digital power of the computer to dramatically change the scale of the pieces, creating through mixed technologies a hybrid art form: *Directed Chaos*.

The paintings present a paradox: while the images appear to be totally alien, the patterns within them seem familiar. Viewers have reported sudden sparks of recognition and the sensing of distant memories.

Johnson's abstract atmospheres are presented in original acrylic paintings on illustration board and in limited editions of giclées on canvas and paper. The giclées are not prints in the usual sense of the word; they are not reproductions of pre-existing works of art. The initial acrylic paintings are digitally recomposed and extensively repainted by the artist. The completed works are the end product of an art-making process similar to the complex series of steps that lead to a multi-color serigraph.

The GPMA exhibition includes work from three series:

- *Summer* (2002-03)
- *Caleo Seon* (2005-10)
- *Pandora*, created in late June and July of this year



Summer #3 • private collection of Wendy Seldon

JOHNSON ARTWORKS www.johnsonartworks.com

1029 Vista Drive, Grants Pass, Oregon 97527 • info@johnsonartworks.com

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Summer #3 • ©2002, giclée on canvas, 86" x 15", edition of 12



Caleo Seon — Firer Odata
©2007, giclée on canvas, 27" x 36", edition of 12

DIRECTED CHAOS The hybrid paintings of RANDY JOHNSON

DIRECTED CHAOS

The hybrid paintings of



Carer en Mino
©2008, giclée on canvas, 48" x 27", edition of 12



Fira Se
©2010, giclée on canvas, 29" x 45", edition of 12



Randy Johnson's directed chaos paintings are pure abstractions: compositional gems found within larger fields of seemingly chaotic disorder. While the images are clearly ethereal, they also reveal stunningly familiar patterns that mimic the underlying structural essence of life forms and natural phenomena.

— Architecture+
2004: Vol. 7
Dubai, United Arab Emirates



Viriditas — X4
©2010, giclée on Epson paper, 11" x 17", edition of 30

RANDY JOHNSON

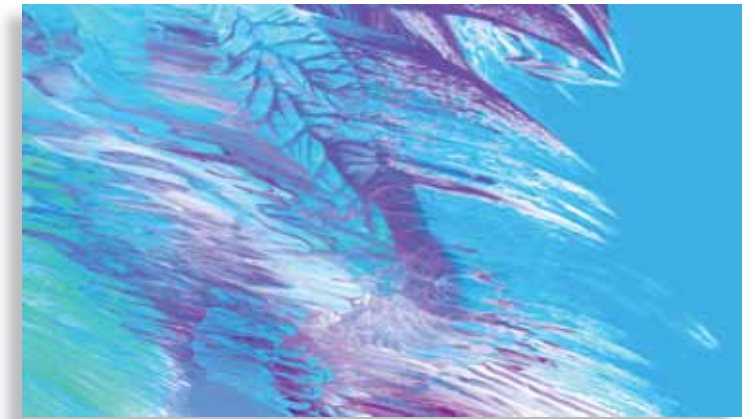
Within the seeming chaos lies a beautiful, hidden order.

Within the chaotic blending, stretching, and folding of my liquid paints I search for zones of a wild, hidden order. Forms in these regions sometimes appear to be self-organizing, and when viewed close-up, beautiful patterns reveal themselves. The jewel-like atmospheres seem familiar because they have a fractal-like quality: they mimic the appearance of the larger-scale, turbulent world of flowing rivers, eroding shorelines, and cloud formations.

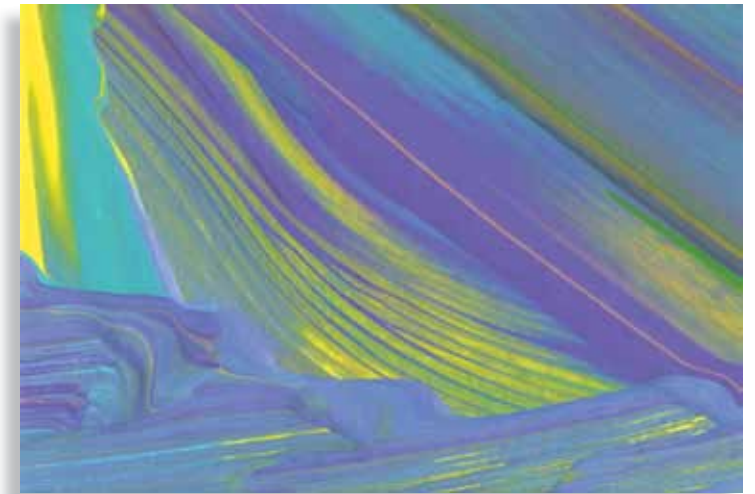
I make these images because they resonate with my own life experience. They can take me to my dream places in the way that a scent can instantly transport me to the ozone-laden air of a windswept southern Oregon shoreline, or a flash of lush yellow greens can send me home to the swaying sabal palms and saw grass of the Everglades.

I become completely immersed in the creation of each of these unique little worlds. That is deeply satisfying, but there's something more: I am continually surprised by the way that the look of swirling eddies and shocks of turbulence in the paint can also act as sensory generators for others.

— Randy Johnson



Summer #5
©2003, giclée on canvas, 51" x 39", edition of 12



Co la Plee
©2010, giclée on canvas, 37" x 24", edition of 12



Viriditas — Region 7
©2010, giclée on Epson paper, 17" x 11", edition of 30



Cush se Ta — Region 1
©2010, giclée on Epson paper, 17" x 11", edition of 30



Coral Reef
©2010, giclée on canvas, 89" x 18", edition of 12