

Visions from Smoke Creek
Paintings by Michael Moore

December 11, 2021—March 6, 2022

Earl and Wanda Casazza Gallery

Michael Moore is a painter based nomadically in the San Francisco Bay Area, southern Colorado, and the Smoke Creek Desert in Nevada. The 1,200-square mile Smoke Creek playa is located north of Pyramid Lake and southwest of the Black Rock Desert, between the Granite and Fox Ranges. Moore spends three to five months a year living and painting at his Smoke Creek studio.

Born in 1942 and raised in Los Angeles, Moore has been drawing and painting for as long as he can remember. He received his B.F.A. in 1964 from Stanford University and studied painting at Yale University's Graduate School of Art and Architecture from 1964-65. After years of moving around the country, he eventually returned to the West, where he continued his lifetime of backroad exploration and artmaking.

In 1985, Moore began spending time at Radar Ranch, a decommissioned military site on a mountaintop near Winnemucca, Nevada. Soon after, in the mid-1990s, Moore and his sculptor-wife Linda Fleming began work on a home-studio complex called Wall Spring, which is located on the west side of the Smoke Creek. For many years they regularly hosted art students from the California College of the Arts for field seminars and workshops at Wall Spring.

While in the desert, Moore rises each morning to paint the landscape of the Smoke Creek playa. This meditative practice yields hundreds of watercolor studies that he displays in his studio in large wall grids. He also traverses the Great Basin seeking subjects for his larger paintings made in either watercolor or acrylic. Moore's thinly applied paints evoke the transparency of the desert and its expansive skies. Moore weaves into his canvases the repeating landforms, vegetation, and desert tracks that together define the evolving tapestry of the Smoke Creek.

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