

David Brewster | Landscape painter

David Brewster, 55, lives in Vermont but also has a studio in Florence. He's been mostly an outdoor painter since he was 17, growing up in the rolling farmland northwest of Baltimore. He's an action painter, he adds, with strong interpretive tendencies.

"I have a reverence for the forces of nature, as well as for the relevance of history — especially our vanishing cultural heritage." He's concerned, he says, with people's disappearing intimate connection with the land.

Hampshire Life: What are you working on currently?

David Brewster: I'm creating a dynamic suite of interrelated oil paintings that provides exposure to rarely seen views of power-generation plants operating in Massachusetts.

The often-monstrous and bizarre forms of nuclear silos, hydroelectric structures, wind turbines and solar farms speak to vast movements of resources and energy, and to their unique and significant impacts on the surrounding landscape and communities.

H.L.: What is your creative process like?

D.B.: My main tool is the foam paint roller, which is the perfect match for the exuberance I bring to my work and the energy and velocity with which I move paint around.

I build up with great gusto an image of the whole visual design, working from top to bottom, side to side, accelerating my paint application with enormous speed. I use a range of tools: the foam paint rollers, my hands, plaster scrapers and whatever I can seize to get the paint on the surface as fast as I can. I shoot from the hip and heart with no formulated intent.

H.L.: What do you do if things go awry?

D.B.: If I think too much, all is lost, yet if I don't sustain a singular vision and focus on the whole, all is most certainly lost.

I joust with my brush or roller against the painting surface, wrestling against unexpected, seductive passages that appear like demons to derail my mission. Mine is a desperate process

D.B.: I persist. I am never afraid to make a monstrous painting or a total mess in order to eventually create order out of chaos.

H.L.: How do you know when a work is done?

D.B.: It's done when I have come as close as I can to creating a unified whole — driving a sin-



Kevin Gutting

of destroy-create-destroy-create. Typically, I wipe out the entire surface with a rag and collapse.

H.L.: Does your work start with a "Eureka!" moment?

D.B.: Never. I'm like a peasant painter doing extremely dirty and exhausting work, digging and digging in the field day in and day out for substantial relationships that trigger my artistic vision. Work animates work.

H.L.: How do you know when you're on the right track?

D.B.: As soon as I take off my civilian clothes and put on my crusty, stiff, paint-covered armor, I understand my sense of purpose and duty in this fleeting lifetime.

H.L.: What do you do when you get stuck?

gular impulse throughout the work from start to end.

H.L.: How does the world appear to you?

D.B.: As a complex network of curvilinear, diagonal, horizontal and perpendicular lines fleshed out with the irregularity and beauty of nature. In addition, clashing planes, lurid color harmonies reflecting our synthetic and incongruous contemporary landscape.

— Kathleen Mellen

An exhibit of David Brewster's work, "Quixotic Encounters, Vermont Paintings, 1996 - 2016," will be on view July 23 through Oct. 2 at the Southern Vermont Arts Center in Manchester, Vermont. For information about the exhibit, visit svac.org. For information about Brewster, visit www.davidbrewsterfineart.com.