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## Geoffrey Olsen: The Miami Paintings

The Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum  
*The Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum*

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An abstract painting by Geoffrey Olsen, featuring a complex composition of colors and textures. The palette includes vibrant greens, deep blues, fiery reds and oranges, and dark, almost black, areas. The brushwork is expressive and layered, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall effect is one of dynamic energy and emotional intensity.

**Geoffrey Olsen**  
The Miami Paintings



## Extended Collage in Imminent Change

Redell Olsen

For Geoffrey Olsen painting was an activity of construction initiated by “the perception of an external world mediated through subjective experience at distinct points in time”. His paintings “oscillate between representation and abstraction” in precarious states. The “fragmentary images” that they incorporate “allude to past certainties” at the same time as they “exist in a condition of imminent change”.

In a statement about his work made shortly after he arrived in Miami he wrote:

“The parallels I perceive between painting and processes such as layering, superimposition, obliteration and the ways in which belief and value systems, particularly those that concern the built environment, can be constantly revised in the light of changing ideologies are of specific interest to my current work”. As this suggests, he worked in series and devised layering systems distinct to particular bodies of work. Series were often built up through a process of “extended collage”: selected fragments of existing works were recombined to make new ones. This way of working grew out of an early series of works on paper in the late 1970s that responded to the social history and industrial landscape of South Wales. In the 1980s and 1990s he produced a number of large-scale paintings in oil and acrylic that developed these ways of working to encompass themes of “growth, decay and regeneration”. This evolved into a growing interest in the Renaissance painting and architecture of Florence and Rome. The hidden and multiple levels of the mosaic filled church at San Clemente in Rome, whose darkness gives way to an intermittent dazzling surface of frescoes, provided an important reference point for his own practice and analogies he saw in the surfaces of the Miami landscape.

His practice was informed by European and American traditions, from European landscape painting, to Abstraction and medieval wall painting. He worked “to establish a sense of ambiguity, imprecision and flux” and to construct paintings that could “contain ambiguities of space, scale and meaning” in dynamic contradiction. This was further explored in the knowingly temporary paintings for walls he made during his first residency in F.I.U. in 1996-7.

Many of the Miami paintings were made “by pouring thinned acrylic paint onto the canvas laid flat, or by applying it directly to walls”. In the notes which he wrote to accompany the showing of the series entitled “Above Eighth Series” which he began in 2001 and continued to work on after he had been diagnosed and begun treatment for leukaemia, he wrote that they were “intended to reflect shifts and modifications to a given order, which although established also seems impermanent”.

(All quotations are from exhibition statements made by Geoffrey Olsen)

## Geoffrey Olsen: In the Mist of Paint

Tony Jones

Geoffrey Olsen studied fine art at Newport College of Art and Cardiff College of Art, both in his native Wales in the UK, and later as a scholarship student at Munich, Germany, for just one reason – to become a painter. He was single-minded in this. While he led a dual life as an artist and an educator, everything was always in service to his dedication to what came out of his studio. Making his work was the baseline of his understanding of the world, his family, his students, his friends. From our first meeting to our last, his sincerity and seriousness of intent, and absolute dedication to being a working artist was his defining characteristic.

We came from the same industrial community in Wales, both went to the same art school at Newport, and from 1962 for two years we shared an apartment. I cannot recall our having many frivolous conversations about art, we were after all busy being bohemians ... serious artists through-and-through ... though the impromptu art history lessons he delivered to a mouse who frequented our little kitchen were often embroidered with great whimsy and humor (the mouse loved them). In an enduring friendship of over 45 years, we seemed to have the same conversations we had as students – who are we, where did we come from, what has happened to us, what do we make of our lives, how do we see, how have our ideas developed, how do we take all those experiences and distill them into the new art work we make, what do we learn from that work?

At the end of his life he lived in the UK in an area of outstanding natural beauty, the Cotswold hills, a landscape loaded with ancient historical sites, and one that has inspired many artists. It abuts that strange and eerie hinterland between England and the Celtic twilight of the border with Wales. But in his early life, he'd lived in the blasted and ripped landscape of South Wales that still bears the remains of the very first explosions of the industrial revolution. And he'd worked in that most quintessential of English university towns, gorgeous Oxford. He'd lived in old Munich and in ancient Rome. And he had thrived in Miami.

He was painter inspired and informed by the landscape, but Geoffrey's landscapes (no matter where he painted them) are allusive (and thus elusive) rather than narrative. The forms and phenomena refer directly to place and land, but don't describe or illustrate them. A place, its history, the stories and myths that are embedded in the paintings, are alluded to rather than described, and sandwiched on top of one another. You can see through the veils of color to shifting forms beneath, ghostly, hinted-at, mysterious. The Welsh critic Iwan Bala noted that Geoffrey's was "a new angle on topography ... that chronicles half-forgotten yesterdays, buried sometimes deep or sometimes close to the surface, invested with a sense of deep memory".

He came from a very specific place that at one time was the largest and most important industrial complex in the world – the Merthyr valley in Wales was the blood-and-guts birthplace of the iron-and-coal industrial revolution that was to fundamentally change the world. The physical effect was that industrialists tore off the coverlet of a gentle landscape to get at the ores lying beneath, exposed those rich seams, and ripped them out. It left a land with deep scars and massive mounds of detritus. That gouged-out and thrust-up landscape appeared early in Geoffrey's painting, and that Welsh experience remained as a reference-point throughout his working life. It informed his way of looking – what he saw was not a landscape shaped by the gentler hand of Mother Nature, but by the mauling hands of *homo faber*, grabbing materials for manufacturing. The Welsh art critic Tony Curtis noted, "He was fascinated that the landscape was actually a human construct ... and though he was drawn to the surface of places, he explored what was far beneath that ground". His life-long friend, FIU Professor Clive King, who came from the same Welsh town, noted that the presence of the history was overwhelming – "The past industrial greatness had slipped into decay, but it supplied us with rich material as artists. Geoffrey's home, for example, lay in the shadow of a monumental man-made mountain of waste material from the iron-mills, which had a gunmetal surface that resembled the landscape of a distant and alien planet. The landscape was full of theatrical dynamics, where breathtaking beauty existed alongside suffocating ugliness". So it was unnatural countryside, terra-formed by industry, and while it may have grassed-over, and treed-up, and smoothed-off, there was the ever-present ghost of the past landscape – a ghost you could see in the daylight.

Geoffrey Olsen taught at Oxford Brookes University, in England, for many years, retiring as Senior Lecturer in Fine Art. He lived and painted in one of the most romantic landscapes in Britain, the gentle rolling hills of the Cotswolds. But after retirement



from Oxford, in 1996 he was invited to Florida International University in Miami, as an Artist-in-Residence. Everything was a surprise. Miami released a passion for strong color in Geoffrey's work that had never been prompted by the softer light and tones he'd experienced elsewhere. The heat, the color, the constant blistering sunshine, the multi-cultural population rooted in a Latin-American ethos, were all new. As Professor Clive King noted "Miami brought out the 'inner-Mediterranean' in Geoff" – not surprising perhaps, given that the Welsh are essentially Iberian Celts (or as one wit put it, "the Welsh are really Spaniards, singing in the rain"). The first coherent response to all this was the "The Miami Walls" suite, which expanded out of the studio to working in new media, an interactive projected work entitled 'Pentimento', in collaboration with the writer Jerome Fletcher. The 'first Miami period' works are complex, highly personal, and seem to be the physical expression of an internal dialogue and analysis of what this new life and new land meant: reaction, speculation, and assertion. He returned to Oxford, though the impact of his time in Miami had a telling effect on the movement of his work, as it would during his 'second Miami period'.

In 1999 Geoffrey was afforded an unusual experience, and it was a signal honor and recognition of the depth and quality of his work – to spend many months in Italy with an Abbey Award in Painting at the British School in Rome. It was his second sojourn in Italy – he'd spent part of a year teaching in Florence in 1992. This created a curious triangle of contrast – the rugged land and light of his native Wales was one point, then the flat landscape, heat and bright light of Miami was another, and then the romantic ambience of the hills of Rome and Tuscany bathed in Italian light. In this Roman adventure he followed in the footsteps of another great Welsh painter, Richard Wilson (1714-1782), who had become entranced with the Italian landscape and had gone to Rome to advance his classical education as a painter. In contrast, Geoffrey took an existing solid body of work and studio experience to Italy, and let the time he spent there strengthen that opus. He wrote to me about the idea of 'following in the footsteps' of Wilson and the great painters of the Grand Tour, and said he was doing this quite literally. While Romans slumbered in the heat at siesta-time, Geoff went, as he wrote, "striding manfully about the ancient city, tracing the places where Wilson had lived and painted" (in unchanging Rome the buildings where Wilson resided are still intact, and are still artist's studios, 250 years later!) and going out into the campagna to the landscapes that had inspired his work. While he felt connected with his historic countryman, Wilson was of an age where the Classical landscape ruled, and painted narratives of castles with mythological overtones and storytelling were the order of the day. Geoffrey didn't narrate, instead he indicated and suggested and speculated. The absolutism of Wilson's kind of illustrational painting was far too literal: instead, Geoffrey's paintings were meditative, ethereal, imbued with spirituality.

It's not surprising that in a landscape loaded with a long history as pagan as it is Christian, he found a focus in an extraordinary church – San Clemente – which is actually the wrecks of several ancient ruined churches piled on top of one another. This church is one of the most peculiar and mysterious in Rome, built over an underground river (he wrote about allusions to the passage of time as a concealed but un-stoppable stream), and used as a 'holy site' well before the dominance of Christianity – indeed, the historical records tells that the Roman emperor Nero had watched as San Clemente burned to the ground. On its charred foundations was layered a rebuilt basilica, which was altered many times over the centuries, and today is still a church, but not of Italian Catholics, it's a church run by the Irish Dominicans. A checkered record indeed, loaded with a strong spirituality derived from multiple belief structures. It's no surprise that this greatly appealed to the artist – layer upon layer of history was stacked just like geological strata – and just like a Geoffrey Olsen painting.

His Roman year was notable for the sheer energy he poured into the work – there were no distractions, nothing to impede exploration, both in the city and in the studio, limited only by the knowledge that his time there had an end-date. In his Roman studio he produced a powerful body of work that clarified a working method – and he said that the uninterrupted time moved his theory and practice forward, accelerated it. In part this involved allowing a combination of control, accident, and the chemical characteristics of paint itself to drive the work. The series of 'grid-paintings' he made in Rome involved his conscious choice of materials, scale and color. Paint applied in thick oily daubs or lines was allowed to drip slowly down the surface of a canvas. Then that canvas was rotated and the process began again, then was repeated many many times, creating layers of grids over grids over grids. So gravity commanded his paint to move, while the amount of turpentine or oil he'd mixed into the paint determined when it would gel and stop moving. This studio 'applied research' began to coalesce into preparations for new work that he would make upon his return to Miami – the 'After San Clemente' series – after he'd fully digested that

research. And that work was extraordinarily beautiful. For those who, like me, are fascinated by the ‘engineering’ of painting, the skill and craft and command of materials, the elegance of physical expression – how he handled the paint and finished the surface, the contrast between transparent sheens and gritty scumbles – is simply brilliant and masterful.

He returned to teach at FIU in 2001, and work in a studio in North Miami. What a contrast. The wet light and low-range color in the landscapes of Geoffrey Olsen’s native Wales – a very old world – is completely different from that of startling Florida, here in the new world. And it’s different from the soft Cotswold hills of England, and different to the gorgeous glow of Roman Italy. But in those differences, those painterly dramas of contrast are keys to his work. As an artist who looked hard at the landscape that surrounded him, he was hypersensitive to what was on and in that land – the history, the color – and what fell on the land – the light. We used to talk about ‘joining the dots’, how did his work get from the misty scrim and veils of soft color in the earlier paintings to the gobbets of lurid reds and acid hues laid into the Miami work? “Place”, he’d say, “Always. It’s about reacting to the layers and layers that make a place”. The ‘dots’ were joined not horizontally in a logical left-to-right sequence, but went from the surface back and deep into the painting. In a real sense, every painting he ever made lay just under the surface of the most recent work.

In returning to FIU from ancient Rome he came back to the young and vibrant ‘instant city’ of Miami. And he returned with a powerful sense of new confidence in the direction of the work. From the elegant studios of the old British School in Rome to an anonymous steel building, notable for its lack of history and its neutrality – it was just a box in which to make work. His FIU colleague Jacek Kolasinski described what Geoffrey had made of it: “The studio was sealed away from the intrusions of the external world, like a microcosmic medieval monastery of higher-learning and exuberant intellectual productivity. Visitors were admitted only on special occasions; painting was a serious business, there was no nonsense ... but those who came knew that they’d been invited for an astonishing feast of colors and forms – and the amount of work he’d produced could overwhelm any visitor”.

I had the same reaction on my first visit to that studio to see new works, some of the ‘Above the Eight’ series, and was overwhelmed by the power of his color – the many works on paper that were spread over the floor had a highly-saturated dominant red as a signature color. They were powerful – and when he opened the studio door and sunlight hit them they became volcanic, like pools of lava boiling on the paper.

The move to Miami opened up new streams of passion in response to his new environment, perhaps the heat and light stoked them up, for the work became even more energetic – like he’d harnessed these forces in some way. It also changed his working methods. His work had always been physical, painterly, about the sheer joy of sweeping washes of paint (usually oil, later acrylics) across paper and canvas, then doing it over and over again, building up subtle veils and laminations of transparent and semi-opaque curtains of tone and color. Below were forms, volumes, shapes and sometimes texts, that were buried in the layers. They were there but elusive and changing and they wouldn’t hold still – I told him once that I always thought of his work when I heard Joni Mitchell sing about “the clouds in my coffee”, or when I read about geology. Unlikely contrasting connections perhaps, but I see the paintings as slices through strata in which an archeology or geology of forms has been embedded, and are seen through rolling mists and fogs of paint – ruins glimpsed, wrecks revealed, clouds arrested, quotations muttered, fossils surfaced.

He’s been classified or described as ‘a dramatic abstractionist’, but that won’t do. I hate categorizations, and Geoffrey Olsen’s work is not easily put into any category – that’s part of its power. It’s a subtle set of contrasts between one’s emotional reaction to the sheer gorgeousness of the paintings, and what lies inside them and beneath them. It is often dramatic, often dreamy and abstract, and for the viewer there is always that surprising moment of “Wait a minute, what am I actually looking at here, what are these things hiding under this milky surface, what is hidden, what is being revealed”? He described this process, of how he worked: “I attempt to find a link between my ideas and the medium of painting through a working method I have developed which parallels this process by means of superimposition, selection, retention, obliteration and re-statement of imagery which culminates in finished works, which I regard as summations of associations and meanings”. One comes to see his solid body

of investigation and research into place and history underpinning what may at first seem to be spontaneous and gestural work. While studying at Newport College of Art it was drilled into us that we had to completely understand our 'source material' before we could manipulate or modify it, and that we owed a debt of respect to what inspired us. Geoffrey often spoke about this, but also how the basis of ideas change as the work begins to form - he allowed for it and let it happen, and respected the unexpected.

He worked to a system of painting that he applied to his work, whether it was made in Europe or Miami. He described his working method as "strict", yet his own description makes it sound more dynamic, spontaneous, and very intuitive: "During the initial stages - and I work on several compositions at the same time - I have no definite subject or format in mind, preferring to allow chance and the intrinsic qualities of the media to combine with my formal awareness to direct the character of the work. Invariably the process involves cutting, tearing and reconstructing elements from several works to form the basis of new compositions ... This reaches a crucial point when the subject matter is identified ... so subject matter and composition are thus evolved together and manipulated until fixed in the best possible formally cohesive arrangement". I saw the first part of this description as 'research' and the second part as 'application', but all at the same time and on the same canvas. He liked that famous remark of Einstein's that "Research is what I'm doing when I don't know what I'm doing". If you apply that to his working method, it means there's lot of initial sifting and shifting, which led to finding a path, and then the work progressed along it, sometimes to surprising conclusions and destinations - Geoffrey wrote: "Such a method of working allows logic, intuition and chance to combine to fix meanings within the structure of each painting ... the final form is not predetermined but instead 'discovered' or 'revealed' ". We spoke several times about how the work contained things not fully seen or comprehended at the time of its making - that works were like sponges that had absorbed light and sense and color not consciously seen by the artist. When the sponge was 'wrung out' on the canvas, the mixing and distilling of these experiences sometimes told the artist a story he only partly knew - the work had a life and a voice of its own.

Specific forms described situations, histories, places - they carried the load. Over each was progressively laid the next form or idea. It sounds methodical, and controlled, and in part it was. But really, what do artists do in their studios? They try to herd cats. Because ideas are like that - unwilling, capricious, cunning, evasive, seductive - the artist tries to get them to submit to some will and discipline, come to order, become a new work. He was bold and physical in his handling of the painting process, and sometimes the methods and ideas obeyed, but Geoffrey's description of the physical control of materials meant that, as he said, sometimes "he was victorious", but that sometimes, well, "the paint won".

As a fellow-artist Clive King commented on Geoff's the development of his Miami work after his Roman year: "The large canvases seem to take both the artist and the viewer cautiously into uncharted waters and engages in the aesthetics of instability and tension ... it feels that they have only become stationary because you are looking at them - turn away and they will continue their transmutations. But the same constants are always present - the layering of places, circumstances, timelines and memory - what gets obscured, what gets changed, what bleeds through. Always a state of flux ... works moving from one condition to another ... that are exotic and haunting".

Looking at Geoffrey's work one is struck by the originality of thought and expression, certainly it's new and different and 'abstract' and puzzling - categorically un-categorized? - but it does sit squarely in a tradition. The eclecticism that is a characteristic of his work mixes conventions - rich abstraction close by the traditions of landscape painting, but alongside references to his interest medieval wall-painting in churches. There was a specific tradition that was of great importance to him, that of the great British landscape painters, which is familiar to most Americans - museums across our nation contain wonderful works by Turner and Constable, artists that he admired. But there is a long line of British painters whose work is virtually unknown in the US, but they are the artists he respected and referenced and saw as kin. Among them would be, of course, Richard Wilson, but also Graham Sutherland and John Piper (both deeply influenced by the Welsh landscape), the mystic Samuel Palmer, and the group of wonderful mid-20th century 'British romantics' whose work was informed by abstraction, surrealism, poetry. Works by the revered David Jones, Paul Nash, Ceri Richards, Ivon Hitchens, and the Cornish Celt, Peter Lanyon do not appear on US museum walls. But these were the artists who Geoffrey looked at, learned from - while we were students many of them were alive and working, and we watched what they did. It is not a stretch of credibility to place Geoffrey Olsen's work in such a

distinguished continuum – the depth and quality of the body of work he produced makes this manifest.

As much as Geoffrey Olsen will be remembered as a powerful painter, there is a parallel dimension to his life that is equally significant – his teaching. He held very senior positions in higher education, most latterly as the Graduate Director and Associate Professor in the Department of Art at Florida International University here in Miami (2001-2007). His teaching legacy endures on both sides of the Atlantic because his passion for making his own art was equaled by how seriously he took the conversations he had with students - about how they would make their own work. A great studio teacher succeeds by gaining the respect and confidence of students by treating them as ‘fellow travelers’ who share a journey, and benefit from shared commentaries on the passage. Geoffrey’s students respected him because he daily fought the same battles they did, trying to fuse ideas, emotions and materials together to bring to life something unpredicted and unexpected. It’s that old ‘head, heart and hand’ story – a set of skills used to command a concept and make it dance. It’s why artists are like magicians. But also why a day in the studio is a wild mixture of elation, frustration and physical stamina – as he once said, “it’s more like unarmed combat”.

A serious student would recognize that when Geoffrey talked to them, he brought that ‘combat experience’ to the conversation, he absolutely knew the depth of commitment a dedicated artist had to apply to really be called an artist. Student artists are smart and they know the real thing – they won’t be fooled or convinced by artists who haven’t served their time, who can ‘talk a painting’ - but not create one that will make your hair stand on end. The respect students had for Geoffrey was rooted in their understanding that he was The Real Thing, a teacher possessed of tremendous integrity – no conversation about art was loose or casual, it was a discussion with someone who was completely serious and completely convincing, and he told you the truth. In other words, he was a mentor, a model, a professional. Miami artist Daniel Vinoly recalled the absolute respect that Geoffrey had for works created by old and new masters alike: “He always looked at works as something given, that had to be seen from the point of view of the creator, considering it not from the perspective of his own aesthetics, or through glasses colored by his own preferences, but rather using the vast knowledge he had to add useful information to the analysis of the work”. And that’s right – he had “vast knowledge” acquired from wide reading and deep study of artists of the past, and those working today. It resulted in him bringing to student critiques, museum or studio visits, a recall of history and practice that placed new work in a context, related it to what had gone before, but applauded (if appropriate) innovations and originality. Gretchen Scharnagle (MFA 2004) said of her time at FIU that “he made a student feel that he was responding to the student’s artwork as art – and not as ‘student art’. This made him seem demanding at times, but for a student it was a win-win situation – no praise needed to be qualified, but no critique was dumbed-down either ... he did this not by demanding excellence, but by expecting excellence”. That word ‘excellence’ appears repeatedly in recollections by friends, students and colleagues. So do phrases about ‘hard work’, the ‘ethics of being an artist’ and, as Jacek Kolasinski (MFA 2002) noted – that “Being an artist is a serious commitment, and not to be taken lightly. As the MFA program director he introduced rigorous academic and artistic standards, but he’d always accommodate the needs of every student he supervised ... he was a mentor to all – patient in guiding both artistic and professional development, correcting, steering, but most of all he was always there to share the wealth of his experience and knowledge. If there was a challenge it was the height of the bar he set – by example. His life and his work-ethic delineated standards I hope I can achieve in my own professional career and life”.

Professor Clive King, reflecting on the body of work that Geoff produced, gives a wonderfully gentle and moving eulogy: “Artists paint for many reasons, but it’s rare to see someone who paints as an intimate conversation with himself. When viewing his work, I feel like I’ve eavesdropped into that inner dialogue. He was a completely serious and committed painter – and the fact that he painted right to the end of his life shows, to me, how important that dialogue was to him”.

I’ve said that I knew Geoffrey Olsen for a long time – from our days as students to the end of his life. But even so it was a time too short. I knew Geoff, and his wife the painter Valerie Jordan, as wonderful friends – we shared good company, and also shared the experience of terrible personal losses no parent should endure. And in my comments about Geoff, and those of his students and colleagues, a portrait may have emerged of a stern tough teacher, scholarly, unyielding, even harsh – “strict” as he said self-descriptively – but I hope not. He had an elegant humor, a great sly wit, a tremendous warmth of personality. I was lucky to have known his work as an artist, but to have known him as a friend wasn’t luck, it was a privilege.



That the Frost Museum at Florida International University hosts this exhibition of selected works is entirely appropriate. These galleries honor the contribution he made as a member of its faculty, and his work as an artist in Miami. It's the first exhibition since Geoffrey Olsen's untimely death from complications of leukaemia in 2007, with work selected by his wife, the artist Valerie Jordan and her family, and with loans from Miami collectors who have generously allowed us to share the pleasure and good fortune they have in living with Geoffrey's work.

*Professor Tony Jones CBE is Chancellor of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.*



**On Sand**, 2002-2003  
acrylic on canvas, 96" x 72"



**Antic**, 2002-2003  
acrylic on canvas, 96" x 72"





**Passing States and Formations**, 2003-2005  
acrylic on canvas, 60" x 48"



**A Balance in a Universe of Contingencies**, 2002-2003  
acrylic on canvas, 96" x 72"





**A moment of Naming II**, 2005  
acrylic on canvas, 48" x 36"





**To Make of Air and Cadence**, 2003-2006  
acrylic on canvas, 48" x 36"



**A Moment of Naming**, 2003-2005  
acrylic on canvas, 60" x 48"





**After San Clemente 2**, 2003-2006  
acrylic on paper, 48" x 36"



**After San Clemente 4**, 2003-2006  
acrylic on paper, 48" x 36"



**After San Clemente 6**, 2003-2006  
acrylic on paper, 48" x 36"





**After San Clemente 7**, 2003-2006  
acrylic on paper, 48" x 36"



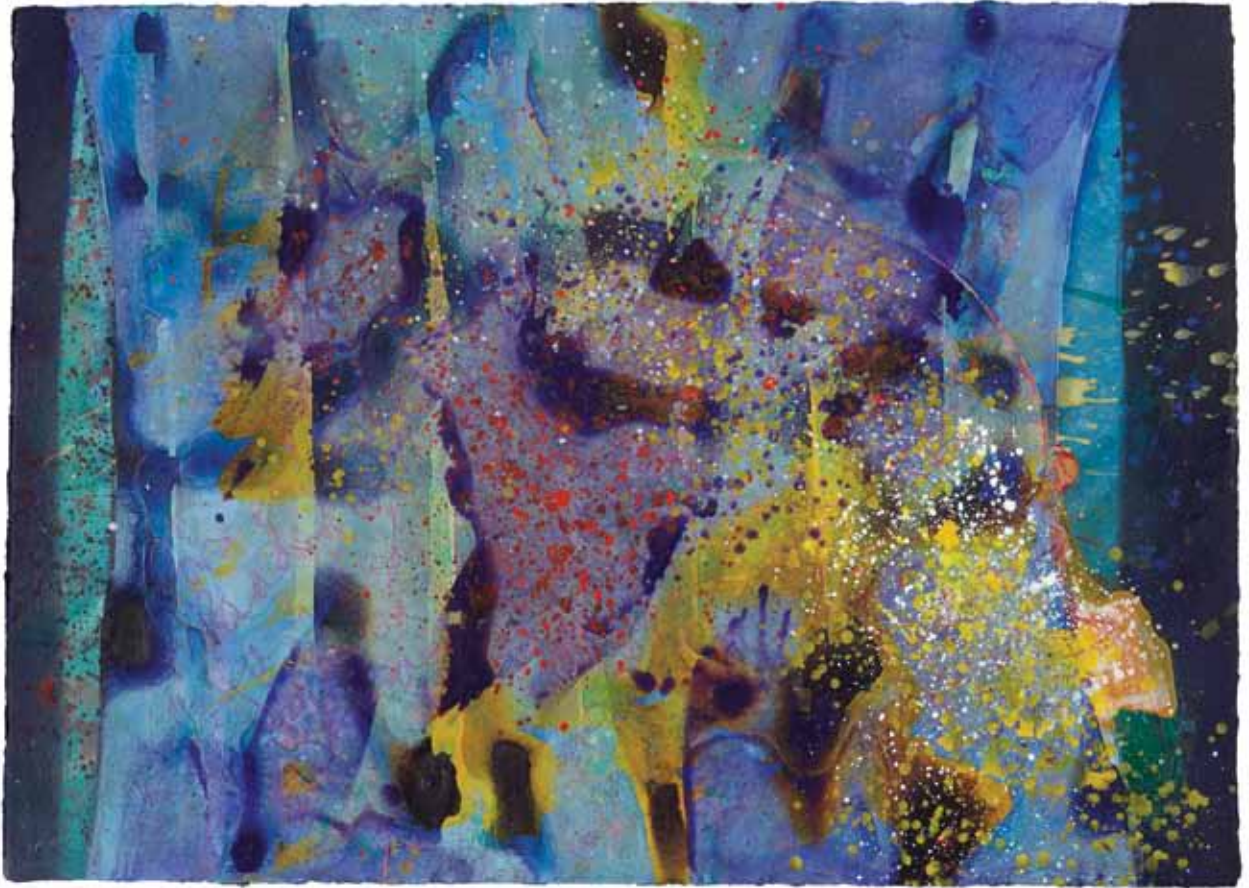


**After San Clemente 9**, 2003-2006  
acrylic on paper, 48" x 36"



**After San Clemente 10**, 2003-2006  
acrylic on paper, 48" x 36"





**Passing States**, 2004-2005  
acrylic on paper, 48" x 36"

## **Geoffrey Olsen**

November 4<sup>th</sup>, 1943 – December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

Geoffrey Robert Olsen was born in Merthyr Tydfil, South Wales and was educated at Newport College of Art, The West Of England College Of Art, Bristol, Cardiff College of Art and The Academy Of Fine Art, Munich. He was a lecturer at Oxford Brookes University in Oxford, UK from 1978 – 2001. In 1992 he was a visiting lecturer at the Studio Art Centers International in Florence, Italy and in 1999 he received an Abbey Award in Painting from The British School at Rome. From 2001-2006 he was an Associate Professor of Painting and MFA Graduate Director at Florida International University, Miami.

### **Solo Exhibitions**

2003 Geoffrey Olsen: The Extramural Series and Related Paintings, The Phillips Gallery, Brewhouse, Taunton, Devon.

2002 Three Series: Recent Paintings by Geoffrey Olsen, The Bridge Gallery (Ybont), University of Glamorgan, Wales.

2001 Geoffrey Olsen: The Extramural Series and Related Paintings, Llantarnam Grange Arts Centre, Cwbran, Wales.

2000 Small Paintings & Collaborative Bookworks, The National Library of Wales & Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum, Cheltenham.

2000 The Extramural Series, The Lewis Elton Gallery, University of Surrey.

1999 She Wore Her Sweat Like Jewels, The British School At Rome, Italy.

1999 The Extramural Series & Related Work, Axiom Gallery, Cheltenham, UK.

1996-7 The Miami Wall-Paintings, Florida International University, Miami, US.

1993-4 Geoffrey Olsen Paintings 1988-93, West Wharf Gallery, Cardiff, Wales.

1990 Recent Paintings and Works on Paper, Including Place of Burial Series, Newlyn Art Gallery, Newlyn, UK.

1990 The Place of Burial Series, South Hill Park Arts Centre, Bracknell, UK.

1985 Geoffrey Olsen, Recent Paintings and Works on Paper, Christ Church Picture Gallery, Oxford.

1984 Geoffrey Olsen, Recent Work, Upstairs Gallery, Oxford.

1984 Paintings, Geoffrey Olsen, October Gallery, London.

1984 Geoffrey Olsen, Paintings, Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

1983 Geoffrey Olsen, Recent Work, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham.

1981 Olsen, Recent Work, Gallery Gwyn Hodges, Oxford.

1979 Works on Paper, Greenwich Theatre Art Gallery, London.

1977 Drawings & Constructions, Prescote Gallery, Banbury Oxon.

1974 25+, Mixed Media Works, Chapter Gallery, Cardiff, Wales.

### **Selected Group Exhibitions**

2002 Works on Paper 2001-2, Rhondda Heritage Park Gallery, Wales. Touring Exhibition: The Washington Gallery, Penarth and The National Library of Wales.

2000 Painting The Dragon, National Museum & Galleries of Wales, Cardiff.

1999 Wales Drawing Biennale 1999-2000, touring exhibition.

1999 The Last Shift, St. David's Hall, Cardiff.

1992 National Eisteddfod of Wales (Prize winner), Aberystwyth, Wales.

1990-1 The Green Show, Ikon Touring Exhibition, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham.

1982 Tien Kunstenaars nit Oxford, Stedelijk Museum de Lakenthal, Leiden, Holland.

1982 Stone Sculpture and Landscape Painting, Moira Kelly Fine Art, London.

1981 Six from Oxford / Seven from Leiden, Museum of Modern Art Oxford.



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DEVELOPMENT



Frost Art  
Museum



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