

Rachel Stiff Biography/Artist Statement

“Most evenings, I can be found on the outskirts of my Nevada town. Looking up, looking out. I climb the side of an uphill range to examine the composition of the city and its relationship with surrounding landforms. The weight of the city nestled into the palm of the earth, the place where water was once as abundant as the sky above. There are endless variations of color and light, depending on the exact location and time of day. Through painting, I frame the modern West; exit ramps serve sunsets to go, and mysterious bluffs quietly exhibit the beauty of perspective from the grocery store parking lot. My ongoing 'Atmosphere' series is about construction/deconstruction/reconstruction, land, fire, water, sky, and air. Working intuitively at first, I allow each painting to develop. The partnership between the painting and myself progresses, as does the importance of decision-making. Mistakes, deliberate forms, controlled spills, and the culling of positive and negative space are the end result.”

Rachel Stiff is a painter and art educator based in Carson City, Nevada. She was born into a small ranching community in rural Montana, where she grew up. Stiff holds an MFA from the University of Arizona in Tucson (2012) and a BFA from the University of Montana in Missoula (2009). Her work has been shown throughout the West and acquired by the Emmy award winning studio, Traktor Films of Santa Monica, California. In 2013, Stiff was selected by RAID Projects for a three-month artist residency in downtown Los Angeles. After living and working in the city intermittently for two years, Stiff moved to Nevada to teach at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. In Las Vegas, her work can be found in the permanent collection of the Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art. Stiff was a featured artist in the exhibition “*Tilting the Basin*,” shown by the Nevada Museum of Art in Reno and Las Vegas. In 2017, a series of Stiff's paintings were included in “*The Nuclear Landscape*” exhibition, in conjunction with the NV STEAM Conference at the Nevada Museum of Art. Stiff was also nominated for the Joan Mitchell fellowship in 2022. Identifying as a true Westerner, her work examines the construction of the modern landscape and desert-urban interface through abstraction.

Quote

"Every day, I walk or run through rugged terrain to observe trajectories of change and sameness in the landscape, as well as the ever-shifting spectrum of light. Being immersed in this environment is important to me, and the grandeur of the Great Basin is accessible by simply stepping out the front door." - Rachel Stiff