

June 18 through August 6, 2023

Finding Roots: Divisionism Revisited

mixed media works by

Clive Fullagar

of Manhattan, Kansas



Drift by Clive Fullagar

Artist Statement

Since emigrating from South Africa to Kansas in 1988, most of my work has been derived from my love of the Flint Hills. My studio is on 83 acres of prairie. I am very fortunate to be able to record both the dramatic and subtle changes to the landscape brought about by the seasons, weather, light, and human impact. Sometimes these changes are fleeting, occurring in minutes and requiring a continuous presence in place.

Most of the work that I am presenting here is based on the root systems of trees left stranded on a man-made beach in the Tuttle Cove area near Manhattan. The beach becomes walkable when little water has been released from the dam and the cove levels are low. When the water levels are high, trees are flooded, and when the water recedes, they become stranded on the eroded beaches formed by the silt. Their roots become totally exposed, clinging to the earth. For me, these trees become symbols of resilience – of surviving the vicissitudes of large reservoir operation and its impact on water levels. The story in these images is one of optimism, of color and hope, of beauty and survival.

This body of work uses mixed media and digital tools to explore Divisionism, a style which Sandzén explored through paint. As the basis of Neo-Impressionism, Divisionism emphasized the separation of color into individual shapes or strokes of pigment to enhance the effect of light. The divergence in our work lies in the means and process by which we achieve luminosity.

My work adopts a mixed media approach to Divisionism in that it uses a blend of photographic, traditional, and digital technology to create art. Like the Divisionists, I am interested in separating the forms of natural objects into their light and color components to enhance luminance. In so doing I am trying to move my landscapes toward a quasi-abstract form. My paintings require the viewer to engage in a form of sense-making by reconciling the representative and abstract elements.

Whereas much of Sandzén's work used a panoramic view of the landscape, my work adopts a more microscopic lens to expose the intimate structure of the land. I am fascinated by root systems, not only in the seeming chaos of their structure, but also in the biographical metaphors they generate; "putting down roots", "the root of the matter," "rooted to the ground" among others. Roots represent for me many of my life experiences, particularly immigration and being uprooted and re-rooted recently by a tornado.

Biography

Clive Fullagar emigrated from South Africa to Manhattan, Kansas, in 1988. He was a professor of psychology at Kansas State University, where he researched and published articles and books on 'flow,' the immersive state of creative activity. In 2019, he retired to pursue his own "flow" in painting and the visual arts. He has no formal training in art. His work is represented in several collections and museums, including the Beach Museum, the Emprise Bank Art Collection, the Alice C. Sabatini Gallery, and the Great Plains Art Museum (University of Nebraska). He is represented by the Strecker-Nelson-West Gallery in Manhattan.

Since becoming Chair of the Manhattan Arts Center Galleries in 2020, he has become a strong advocate for local and regional artists, showcasing their work through social media.



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