



Connecting People with Nature
through Science and the Arts

Paper Mosaics of Nature



Artist: Benji Rowan

Art Exhibit: March 01-April 11, 2012

Exhibit Reception: Wednesday, March 14 6:00pm-7:30pm

Artist Statement:

The mosaic method allows me to produce formalist images that aim at conveying a purely visceral affect to the viewer. Background and foreground colors come together to create a "color field", or abstract mosaic in appearance- I consider them landscapes, or figure mosaics depending on the subject. Each color or shape in the landscape mosaic is meant to represent something found in nature or recognized as a landscape motif. Blue = water, round = moon or sun, wavy line = path, etc., simply because I label them as such. I prefer that the finished piece not remain simply an abstract "color field," but an idealized, or classicized, representation of what is real, through particular motifs that I identify with. This keeps my work from being true abstraction. The vague color field, or abstract style, alluded to in my mosaics engages the viewer at a visceral level, while the information from the landscape or figurative features keep the viewer grounded in a literal sense with recognizable motifs.

The fact that these places do not exist is not important, they simply are classical, or stylized images of what we recognize as the beautiful or picturesque. I am not documenting a place, I am simply using these common themes to create the feelings a viewer is conditioned to have while viewing a landscape or figurative work based in a serene setting.

Unlike painting with its emphasis on brushstroke, the mosaic process has given me another outlet in which to show expression through technique. I have erased the possibility of the gesture created by brush stroke and replaced it with the generative process of mosaic "chip" placement. I have discovered that the movement created in the color fields by the mosaic pieces has a similar affect to the brushstroke gesture, even though it is a movement created by chance, unlike the brushstrokes of the painter, which are movements that represent emotion.

Artist Biography:

Benji Rowan was born and raised in St. Louis, MO. He attended school at the St. Louis Community College, School of Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and graduated from the San Francisco Art Institute in 1999. He is currently an artist in residence at Next Dor in St. Louis, MO.