

WILLY BO RICHARDSON

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MUSIC TO DRIVE TO

WILLY BO RICHARDSON STUDIO

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

Essay by Stephanie Buhmann

Plates

Essay by Katy Crocker

Selected Exhibitions

Selected Press Reviews

Selected Collections

Contributors

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Willy Bo Richardson
Santa Fe, NM

VOICING THE INTERIOR: THE WORK OF WILLY BO RICHARDSON

Willy Bo Richardson's work looks inward. His abstract paintings are about experiences, some of them abstract and others abstracted through memory. The space he investigates is without boundaries. It is timeless. Here, any distinction between the past and present has long vanished. The world he aims to capture is ethereal and possibly beyond reach. This is the reason why his quest is ongoing.

Recently, Richardson shared with me a past dream, which had a tremendous impact on his future ambitions as a painter. In this landscape of the imagination, where reality and fantasy are blurred, he found himself in 1997 Bastrop, Texas, in his early 20s. As was true then, he simultaneously worked and attended school. However, for several days at a time—and here the dream diverts—he watched himself getting lost in a pine forest, painting and writing poetry. “In this creative part of the dream I saw myself moving through timeless space. Traveling at incredible speed there was only bliss and fearlessness—the result of an unfettered mind.” In his paintings, Richardson has aimed to capture this ideal of place of self ever since.

But what language, what visual manifestation could describe something this abstract? In Richardson's case, the artist has found his meditation in a continuous rhythm. Since his last year in graduate school at Pratt Institute in New York, he has filled his canvases with layers of vertical strokes. “I used the vertical strokes because they had a neutral behavior—they allowed me to look at the colors and proportions without thinking of the pictorial space or abstrac-

tions of objects.” A decade later, he has not only continued to pursue this path, but his commitment remains unwavering. His process is his ritual.

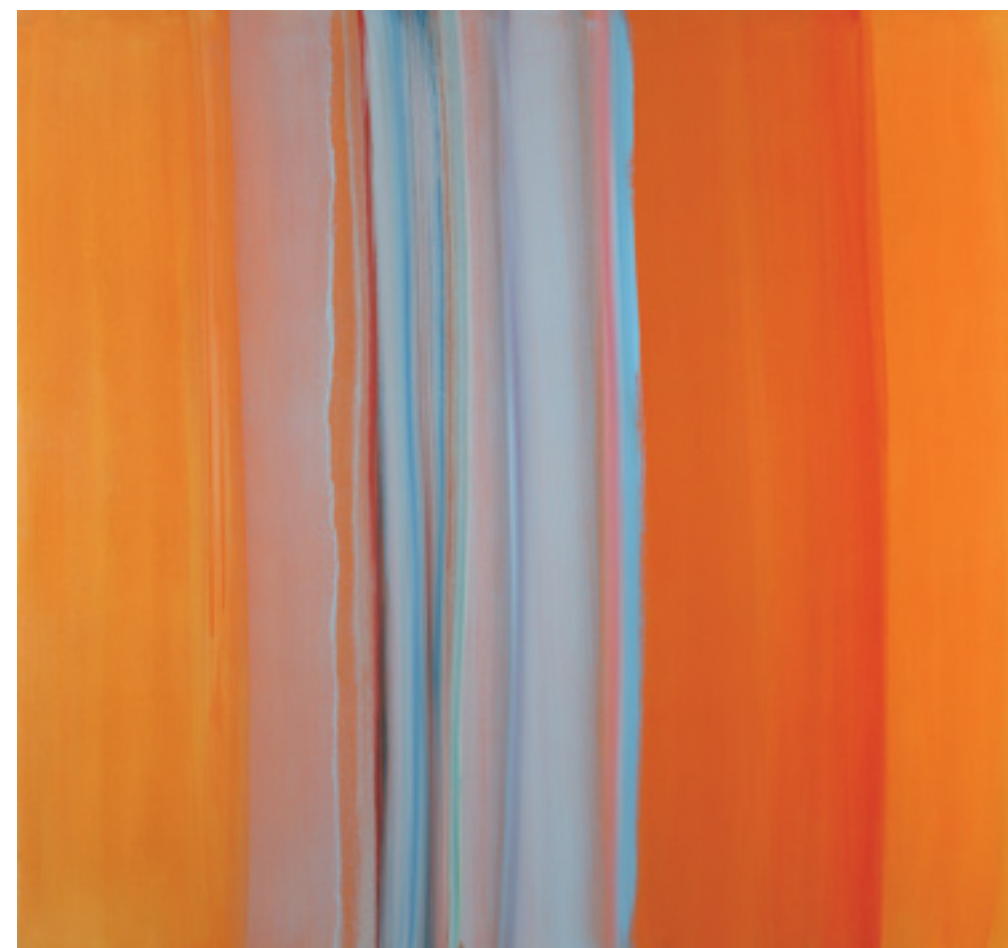
It is the vertical movement of the hand that characterizes Richardson's practice and provides the works' only overt sense of structure. It establishes the illusion of direction and sequential calm. However, it is Richardson's choice of palette and variations concerning the density of mark-making that define the unique appearance of each individual composition. The works are not simply mileposts that line the artist's larger journey. Each encapsulates its own universe and promise of infinite possibilities.

Stephanie Buhmann
New York, NY

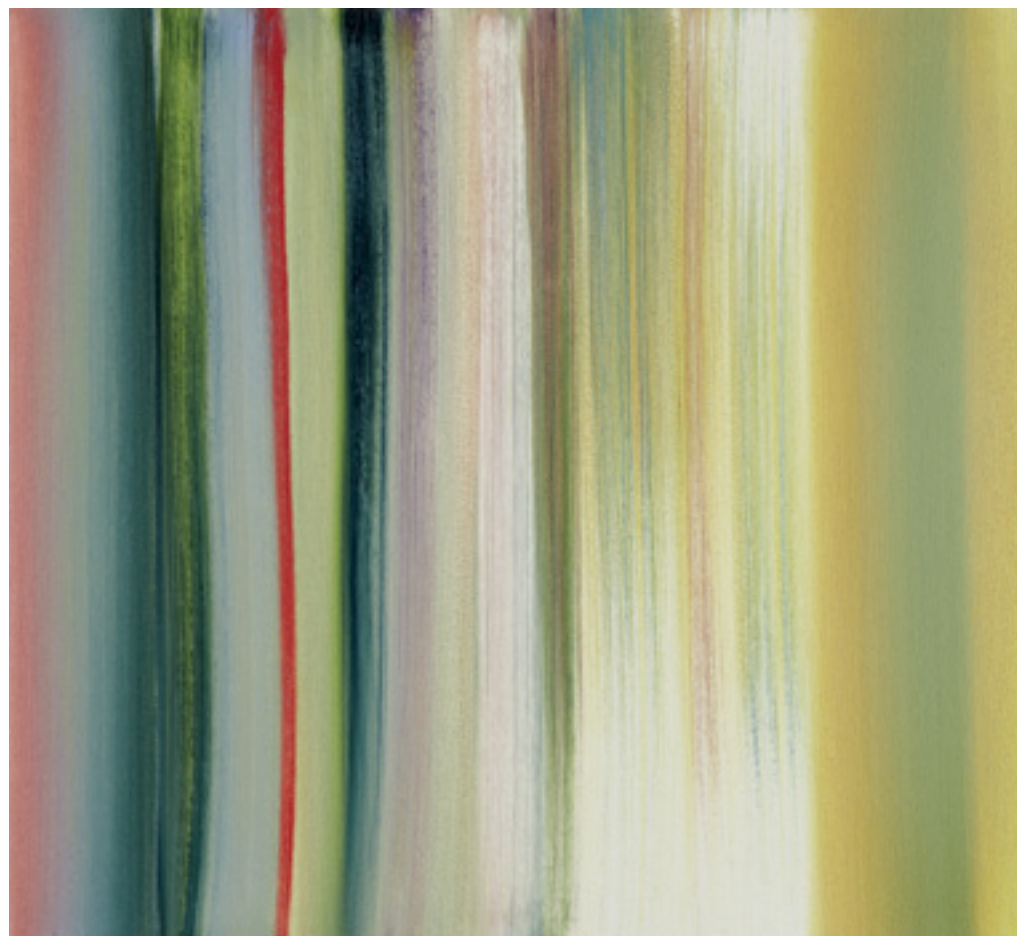
PLATES



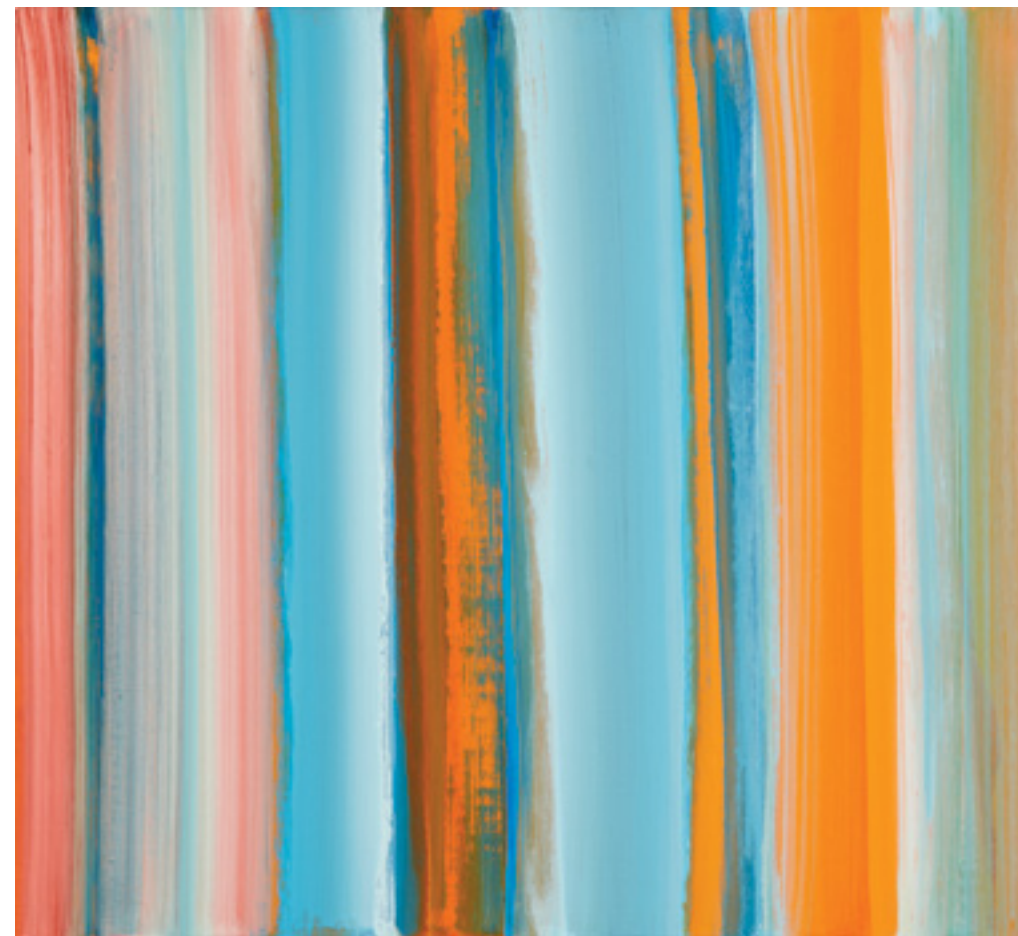
Music to Drive To
2010 53 x 57 inches oil on canvas



333
2011 53 x 57 inches oil on canvas



Northwest Corridor
2006 18 x 19.5 inches oil on canvas



Three Muses
2011 18 x 20 inches oil on linen



Walkyries 3
2010 41 x 47.5 inches oil on canvas



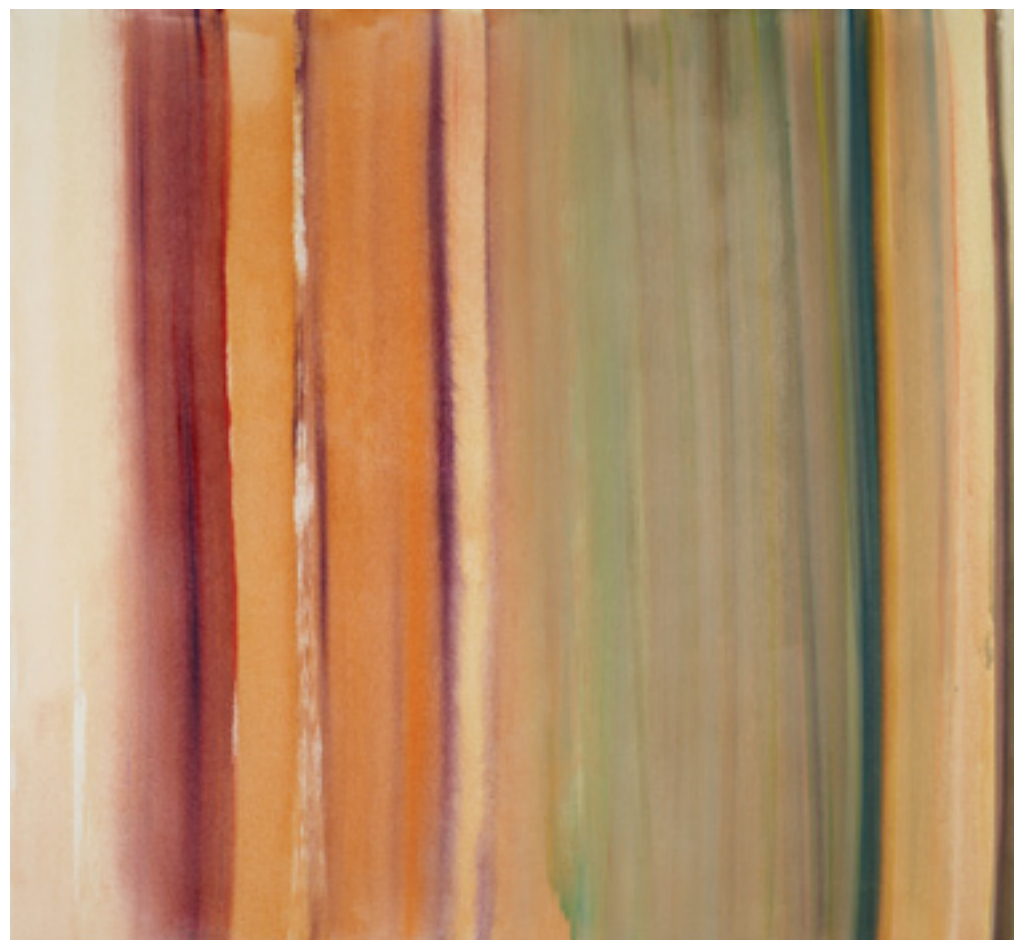
Walkyries 4
2010 41 x 47.5 inches oil on canvas



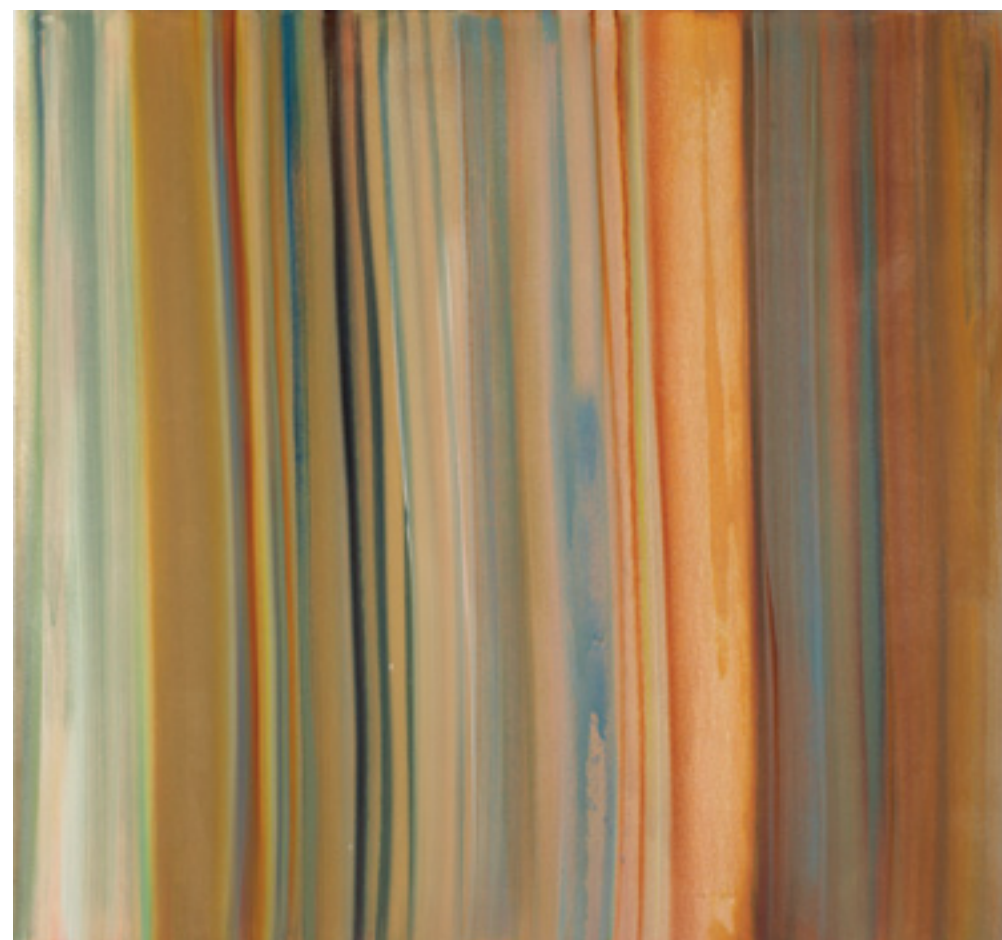
Clear Light 2
2010 40 x 47 inches oil on canvas



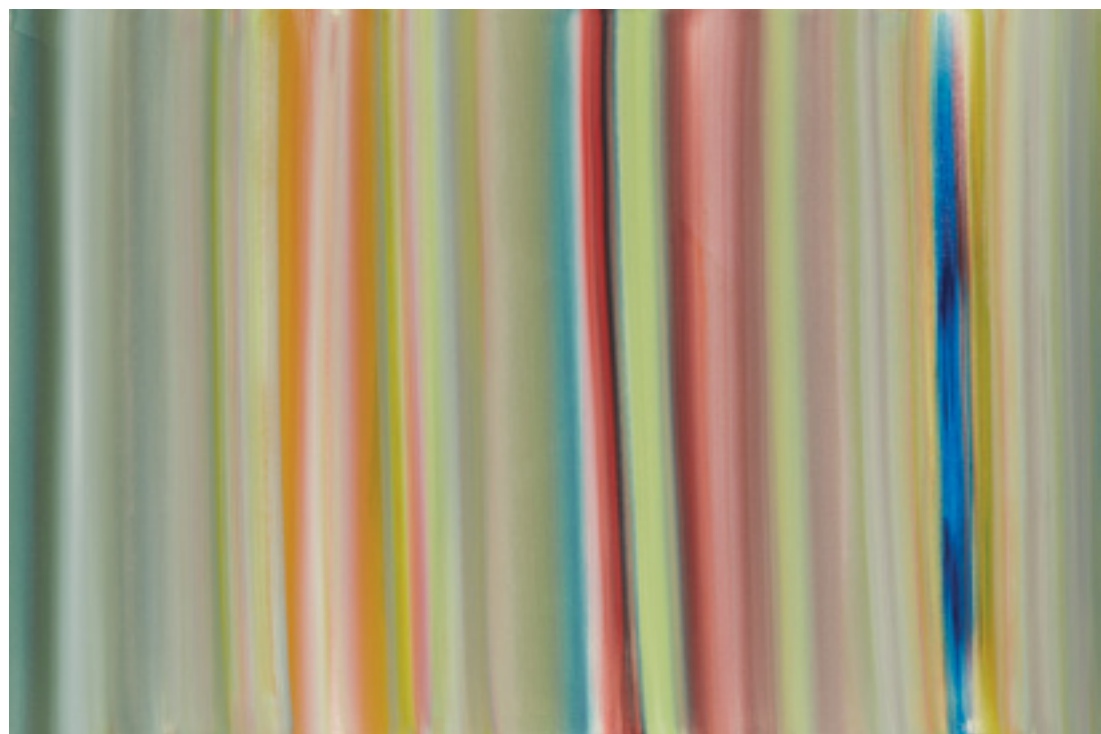
Music to Drive To 7
2012 51.5 x 55 inches oil on canvas



Demeter
2007 53 x 57 inches oil on canvas



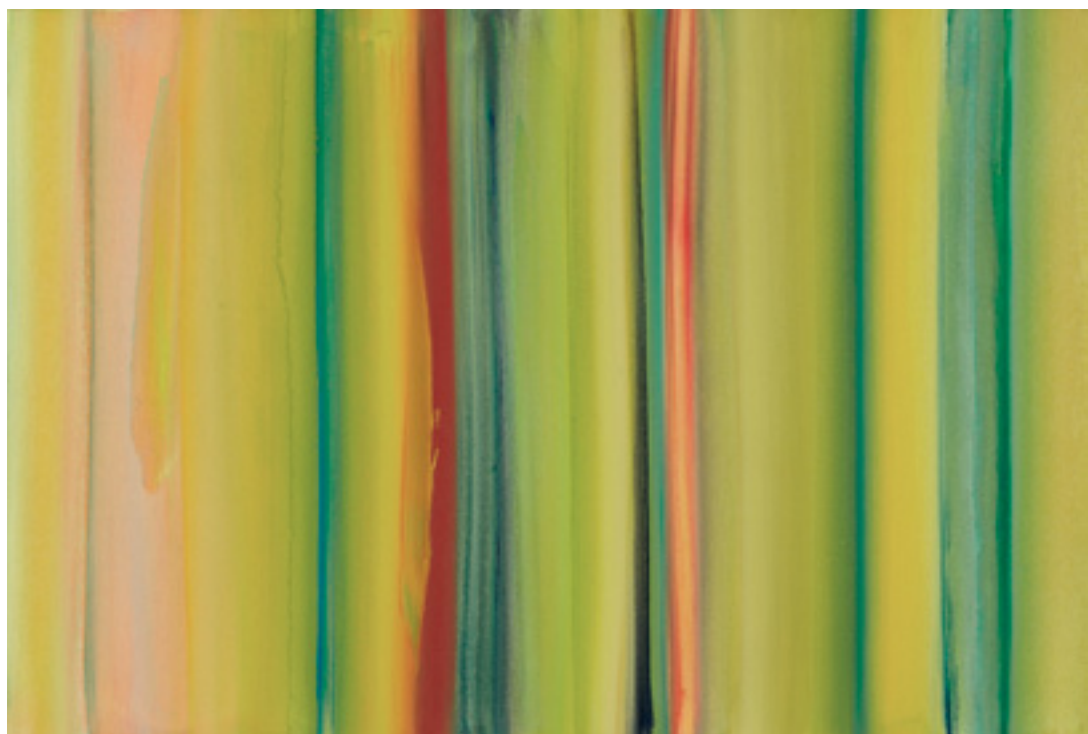
Hephaestus
2007 53 x 57 inches oil on canvas



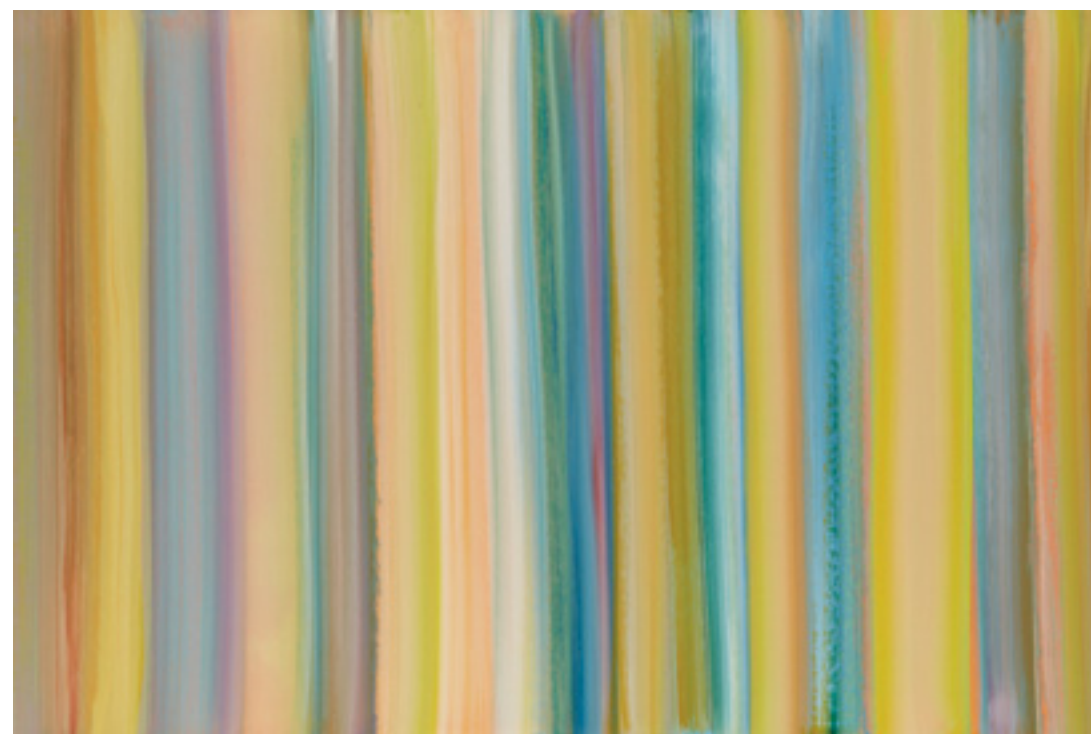
Clear Light 11
2010 24 x 36 inches oil on canvas



Walkyries 2
2010 24 x 36 inches oil on canvas



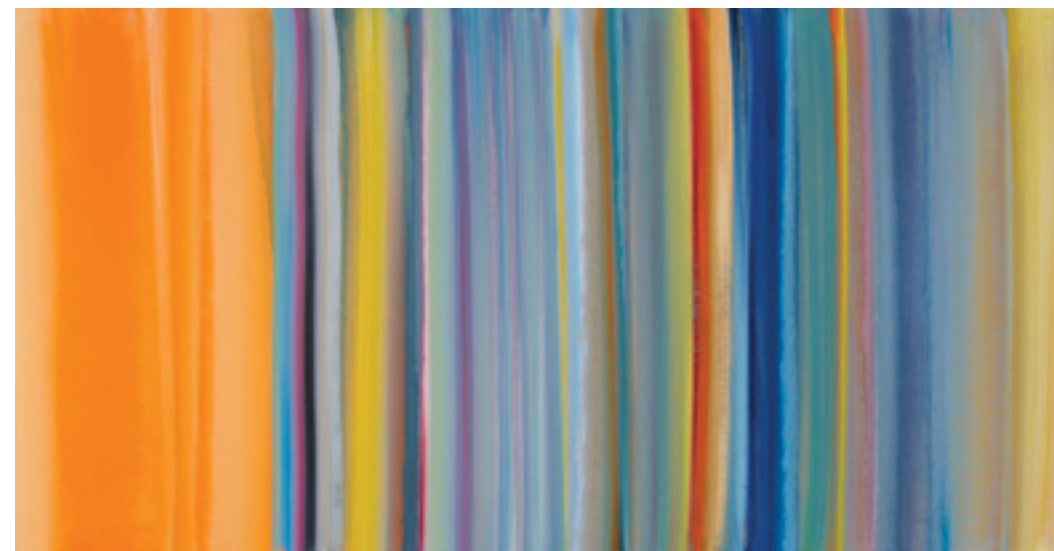
Bathers 2
2009 24 x 36 inches oil on canvas



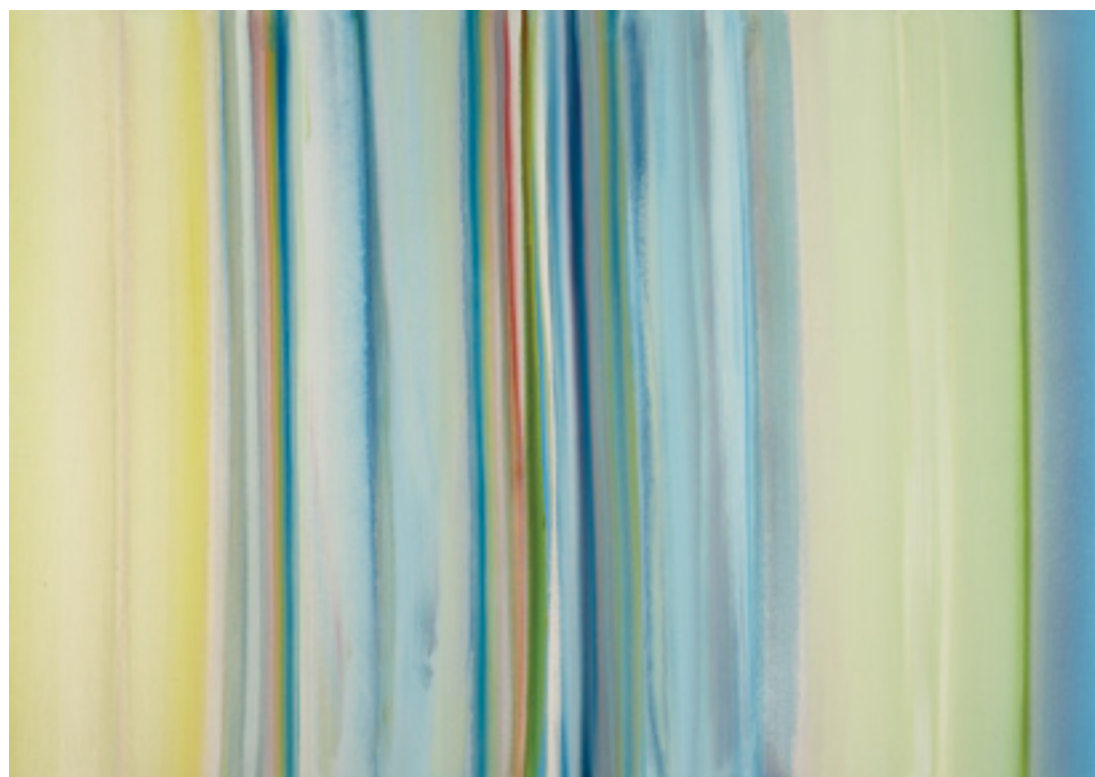
Bathers 25
2010 24 x 36 inches oil on canvas



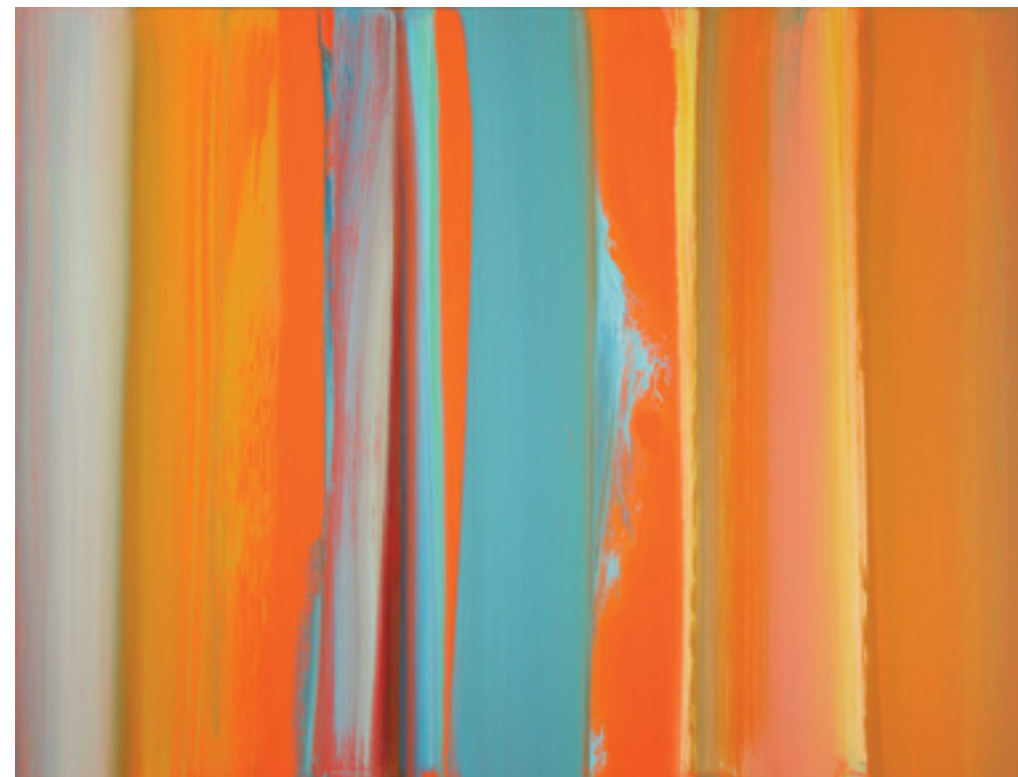
Poseidon 2
2010 53 x 114 inches (diptych) oil on canvas



Epidaurus
2011 18 x 35 inches oil on linen



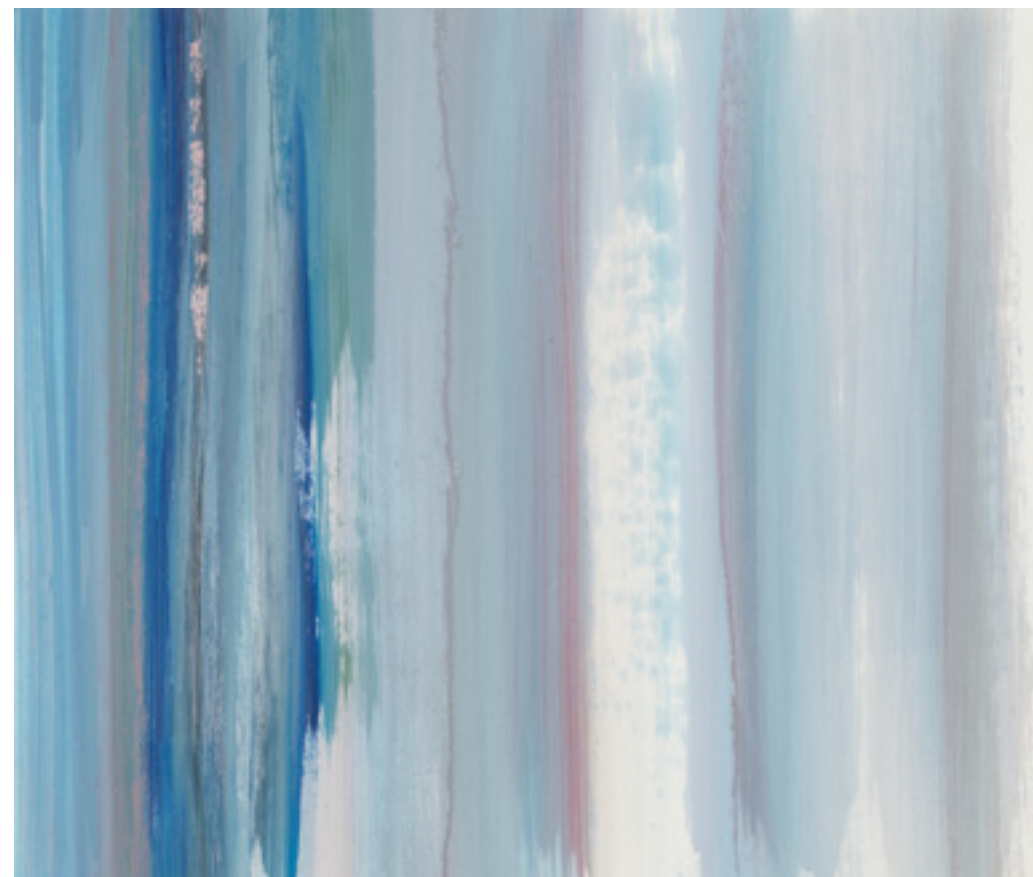
Clear Light 14
2010 35 x 50 inches oil on canvas



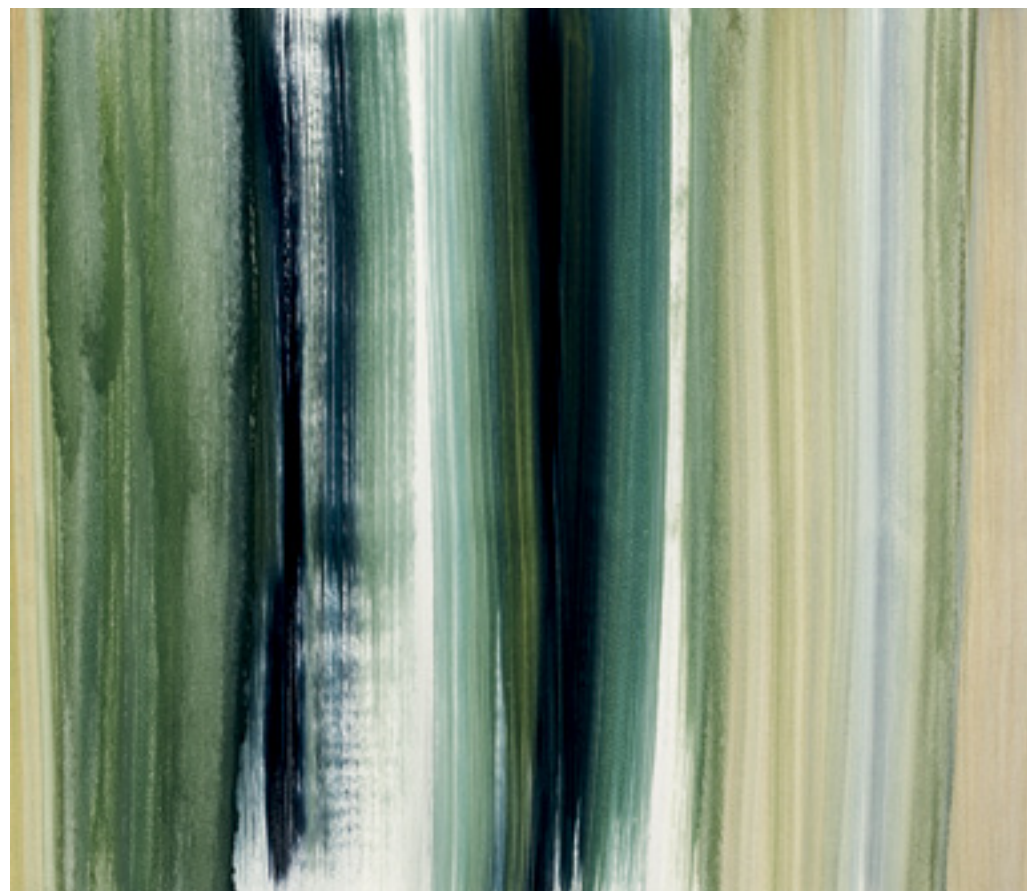
Three Muses 4
2012 12 x 16 inches oil on wood panel



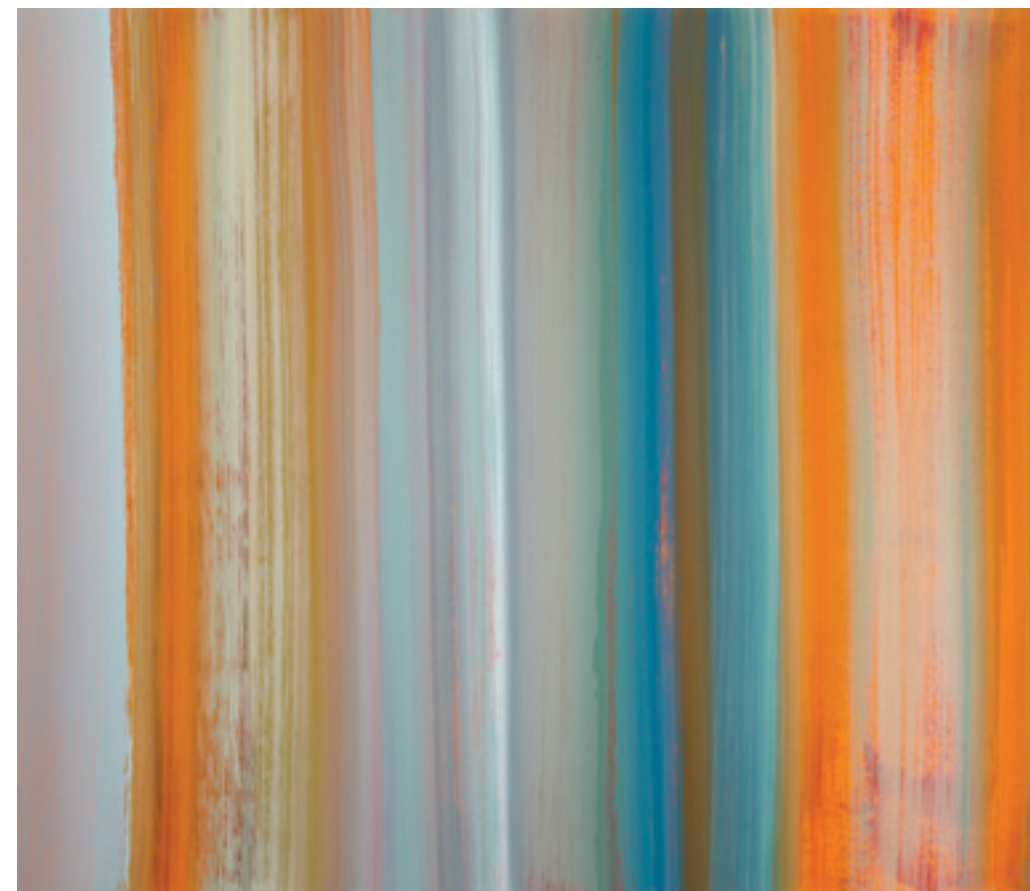
Clear Light 11
2010 18 x 20.5 inches oil on paper



Clear Light 5
2010 18 x 20.5 inches oil on paper



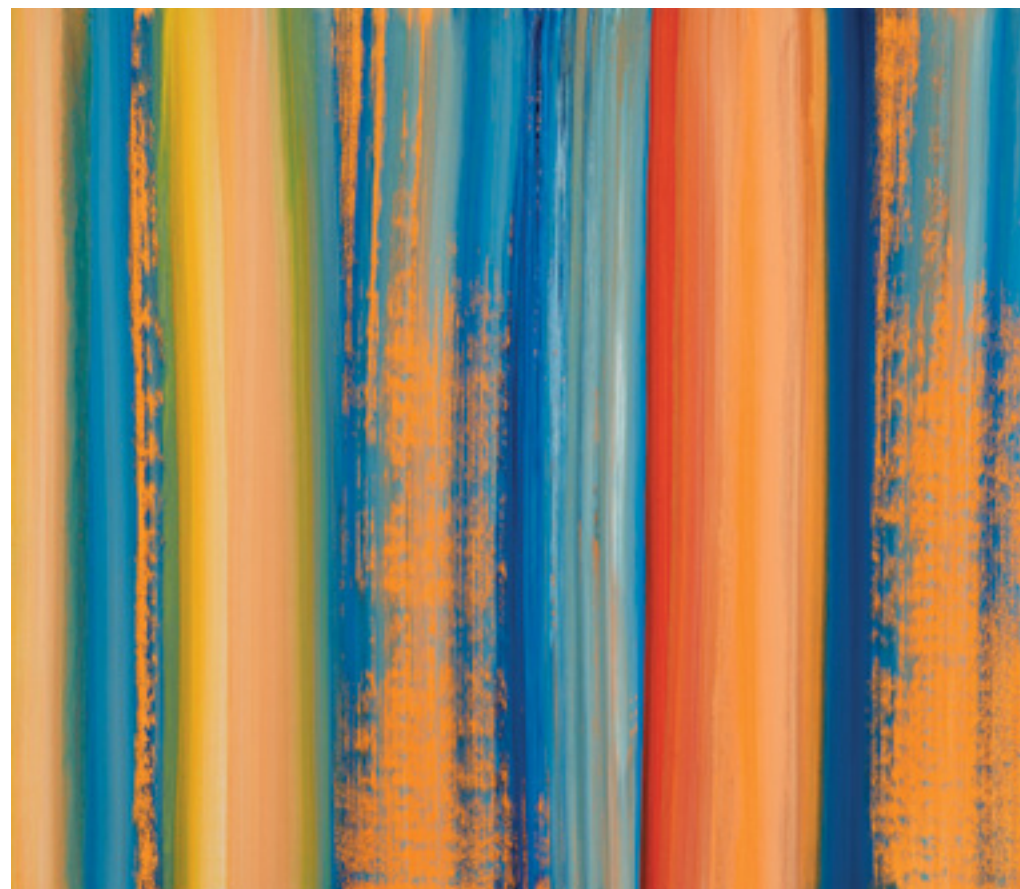
Bathers
2007 18 x 20.5 inches oil on paper



Three Muses 7
2012 18 x 20.5 inches oil on paper



Clear Light 13
2010 18 x 20.5 inches oil on paper



Three Muses 2
2011 18 x 20.5 inches oil on paper



Suffusion 12
2008 10 x 11.5 inches watercolor and gouache on paper



Suffusion 9
2008 10 x 11.5 inches watercolor and gouache on paper

MUSIC TO DRIVE TO

“Colors present themselves in continuous flux,” writes Josef Albers, *Interaction of Color*, 1963, “constantly related to changing neighbors and conditions.” Opposing blues and oranges vibrate rapidly when placed next to one another—causing excitement. Vibrating boundaries heighten interactions between two colors. Like Albers, color serves as Willy Bo Richardson’s primary subject.

In 1999, Richardson experienced Robert Irwin’s non-sequential scrim installation at the Dia Center in Chelsea. Inspired by Irwin, Richardson abandoned the representational imagery of his previous work and moved deeper into abstraction. Unwittingly following a similar arc to Irwin, Richardson envisioned a new structure for color: vertical strokes. The artist chose formal criteria, which, he says, “allowed him to experiment with color and proportion without thinking of pictorial space, or abstractions of objects.”

Music to Drive To emerged within this new paradigm, and Richardson’s latest body of work reaches higher notes of excitement—enlivening canvases with brighter oranges and reds. Colors pop. Eyes widen. Vertical strokes might resemble relics from a dream, or histories without words—each color perhaps symbolic of a different emotion, radio station, or musical note. In a synesthetic fashion, vibrating colors are like sounds, provoking movement. Transitions of color seem to indicate the passage of time.

Color Field painters from the early part of the Abstract Expressionist era, like Rothko and Hans Hofmann, favored color and proportion over the expressive

lines of drip paintings, for example. The more controlled handling of paint places the primary focus on the delicate and changeable relationships between colors. Informed by preceding movements like surrealism, automatism remained tantamount for artists of the Abstract Expressionist movement. In other words, the overarching formal structure must be simple, so as to incorporate the artist’s spontaneous moods, or philosophical metaphors.

“So long as we hear merely single tones, we do not hear music. Hearing music depends on the recognition of the in-between of the tones,” writes Albers, referring to color, and implying the proper viewing of a painting depends on invisible reactions that synthesize the whole composition. Thus, space carries meaning. Invisible reactions, which might relate to a memory once had, or a song once played, affect the work tremendously.

Music to Drive To suspends linear time and space for a moment. Driving long distances provides a playground for the mind to wander while the body sits relatively still. On Richardson’s road trip, color interprets music—and a painting shares the excitement of a symphonic crescendo, or live concert.

Katy Crocker
Austin, TX

BIO/RESUME

EDUCATION

- MFA *Painting*, 2000
Pratt Institute, New York
- BA *Fine Arts and English*, 1996
University of Texas, Austin
University of Wisconsin, Madison

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- 2012 Parralux Art Fair, London UK
Holly Hunt: Miami, Los Angeles
- 2011 *70 Years of Abstract Painting-Excerpts*, Jason McCoy Gallery,
New York, NY
Holly Hunt: New York, Chicago
- 2010 Art Santa Fe, LaunchProjects, Santa Fe, NM
Museum Works, Chicago Merchandise Mart, Chicago, IL
- 2009 *Songlines*, Gallery Sakiko, New York, NY
Summer Reverie: Invitational, William Siegal Gallery,
Santa Fe, NM
Willy Bo Richardson Recent Works, LaunchProjects, Santa Fe, NM
Pairs, Ambient Art Projects, Las Vegas NV
- 2008 *Willy Bo Richardson: Lolland and Other Places*, Gallery Sakiko,
New York, NY
New Artists, New Work, William Siegal Gallery, Santa Fe, NM
- 2007 *Richardson²*, Center For Contemporary Arts, Santa Fe, NM
Transformations, ICD and Art Connects, New York, NY
Common Threads, Fresh Paint, Los Angeles, CA

2006 *Winter Salon*, Gallery Sakiko, New York, NY
Willy Bo Richardson: Confluence, Gallery Sakiko, New York, NY
Summer Color! Gallery Sakiko, New York, NY
The Water Show, The Gallery, Sag Harbor, NY
Inside Out, River Bank Lofts, Chicago, IL
Black and White, Holland Tunnel, New York, NY
 2005 Residency Exhibition, Bayo Arts, Iowa City, IA
 Academy Gallery, University of Tasmania, Launceston, Australia
 Diamond Way Buddhism Benefit, Poissant Gallery, Houston, TX
 2004 *Small Works Salon*, The Gallery, Sag Harbor, NY
Flowering, Bayo Arts, Iowa City, IA
X Semination, Kings Gallery, Sydney, Australia
 2003 *New York Art Independent 03*, Ausstellungshalles des Kurorts
 Timmendorfer Strand, Germany
Brooklyn On 57th Street, Nohra Haime Gallery, New York, NY
 Stevenson Fine Art, Brooklyn, NY
 2002 *Willy Bo Richardson*, Tricia's Place, New York, NY
New York Art Independent 02, Kunstraum, Westerland, Sylt,
 Germany
 2002 *Editions Project*, Brooklyn Front Gallery, Brooklyn, NY
 2001 *New York Art Independent 01*, Kroll-Vogel, Hamburg, Germany
Transitions, Acquisitions, and Parochials, L-Art, Brooklyn, NY
 2000 *LandEscape*, Dieu Donne Papermill, New York, NY
 DFN Gallery, New York, NY
Pratt Institute MFA Thesis Exhibition, Brooklyn, NY
 1998 *Borders on Rittenhouse Square*, Philadelphia, PA

SELECTED PRESS REVIEWS

Roalf, Peggy: "Abstraction: Informers and The Informed,"
Design Arts Daily, April 21, 2011
 Crocker, Katy: "Painting, Doritos and Color Theory—The Work of Willy Bo Richardson,"
The End of Being, April 2011
 "Artists to Watch in 2010,"
Décor Magazine, January, 2010
 Fischer, Zane: "From Darkness: Light,"
Santa Fe Reporter, November 5-11, 2008
 Sauthoff, Patricia: "A Father and Son Take Inspiration,"
Santa Fe Reporter, October 17-23, 2007
 "Featured Artist: Willy Bo Richardson,"
Art Connects New York, April 2007
 Buhmann, Stephanie: "Confluence: Willy Bo Richardson,"
Catalogue 2006
 "Visiting Artist to Exhibit Work Inspired by Autumn,"
The Gazette, Iowa City, IA, Nov 13, 2005
 Webb, Penny: "The Mouse That Roared,"
The Age Review, Tasmania Australia, Jan 7, 2005
 Borensztajn, Jordana: "New York Comes to Town,"
Herald Sun, Australia, Jan 17, 2005
 Riggs, Don: "Writing Under Pressure,"
Drexel University Journal, Philadelphia, PA, 2004
 Wasserman, Rebecca: "Richardson's Rainbow at Nohra Haime Gallery,"
The Crimson Feet, Oct 2003
 Miyamura, Mariko: "The Art of Living,"
Wisdom, Oct 2003
 "Sechs Künstler aus Big Apple,"
Sylt Life, Sept 2002

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Diamond Way Europe Center, Immenstadt, Germany
Harrah's, Lake Tahoe, CA
Hyatt Regency, Orlando Grand Cyprus Prefunction, Orlando, FL
Intercontinental Hotel, San Francisco, CA
International Center for the Disabled, New York, NY
Loews Miami Beach, Miami, FL
Loomis Sayles & Company, Boston, MA
Marriott Rivercenter, San Antonio, TX
MGM Mirage, Las Vegas, NV
Miraval Resort, Tucson, AZ
Moen Group, Plaza Towers, Iowa City, IA
New Orleans Hyatt Regency, New Orleans, LA
Red Rock Resort, Las Vegas, NV
Reebok Corporation, Los Angeles, CA
Saban Entertainment, Burbank, CA
Scrub Island Villas, Saint Croix, U.S. Virgin Isles
Swissôtel Chicago, Chicago, IL
Tampa Marriot Waterside Hotel and Marina, Tampa, FL
The Mansion on Peachtree, Atlanta, GA
The Ritz-Carlton, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands
The Westin Convention Center, Pittsburgh, PA
The Westin St Francis on Union Square, San Francisco, CA
Tokyo Park Tower, Tokyo, Japan
Venetian Resort, Canyon Ranch Spa, Las Vegas, NV

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The Artist
Photo credit Jen Fong

