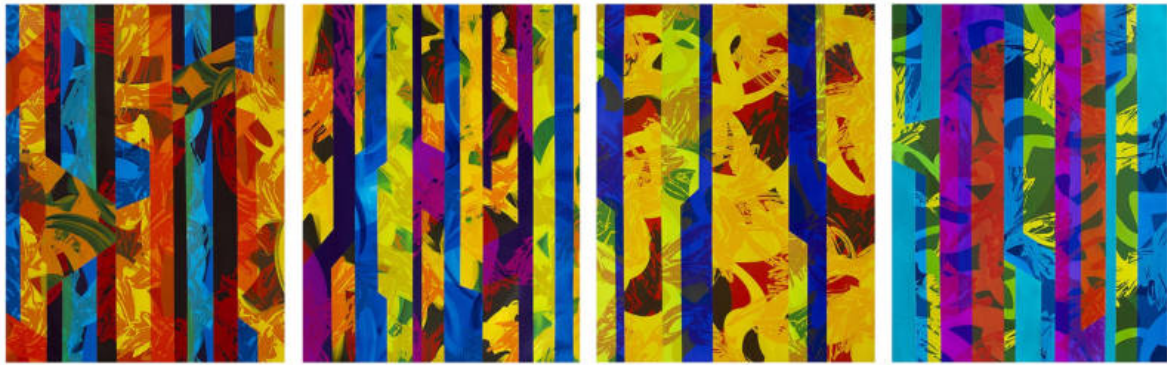


## **The Markella Project Mark & Elena Erickson Paintings**



**Birdwire I & II & III & IV (Quartet) - Elena Erickson - 30" x 92" (76cm x 234cm) - acrylic on paper**

Looking at the paintings of Mark and Elena Erickson is an experience in color and movement. Bright areas of pigment slash across a brilliant background or float above expansive landscapes. The viewer is gripped by an immediate and powerful response to the sheer explosion of color and the substance of the paint itself. In their relationship, both in marriage and their lives working together in the studio is a true collaborative spirit, each helping the other in thought and deed. In early 2020 the times were right for their collaborations to awaken with new enthusiasm. Steady work in the studio commenced and 'The Markella Project' was born. Painting, collages and writing/poetry were undertaken, like none other before, the year brought on an unique concentration and a sense of discovery.

Mark and Elena's work originated in theory from Abstract Expressionism, where in the mid 20th Century, a groundbreaking revolution in American art became a rich tradition and point of departure for Mark and Elena's work. Influences of painters of the 1950s are evident in their work, yet the direction is their own, clearly felt as the paintings breathe the fresh air of contemporary thought.

Mark's paintings have an urban energy with whirring colors flying across a brightly lit metropolis. The shapes, so perfectly formed and propel the pigment off the surface of the canvas. Erickson, transforming the flat plane, breathes life and depth into his paintings and pulls the viewer into the experience. He does this by modulating color against color and form against form in such a way that you feel you can travel within the work. It is easy to see his quick progression in experimenting with differing aesthetic issues and emerging with his own very original and individual voice.

Elena's initial direction and interest in art making originated in analog photography. Carrying her Canon A-1 film camera everywhere she went and setting up a darkroom in her apartment bathroom in Basel, Switzerland. Moving later to the San Francisco Bay Area in California, Elena started studying abstract painting with Mark. That enriching background enabled her to find her own style of painting. Through trial and error, the painting techniques developed quickly until she found something that was her. Elena's paintings revolve around color, design, fabric and nature.

Elena often starts a new creation with small color studies on paper. Their assistance in her larger paintings on canvas is vast. Exploring colors, hues and shades and how they affect each other is at the core of her approach to painting. Color theory is an important part of the process in creating these large canvases. As Elena states: "Brush work is essential, the details are carefully shaped and manipulated as I proceed. It takes steady hands and an awareness and sensitivity for the desired lines I seek." Playing with reflections, mixing paint and exploring colors, her goal is to attempt and capture a static energy in her canvases.

Working together in their studios in their studios in Oakland and Venice, California, the work space becomes a source of inspiration. On a beautiful day sunlight pours through a twenty foot wall of windows, enabling experimentation with light and paint, casting shadows and silhouettes on the walls.

To read more about the various 'Painting Series' descriptions and explorations scroll down to the end of the images.



Dancers – Elena & Mark Erickson - 54" × 54" (137cm × 137cm) - acrylic on canvas





The New Dawn Which Now Sheds It's Rays - Mark & Elena Erickson – 48” x 48” (122cm x 122cm) - acrylic on canvas



**Anatomy of Red - Mark & Elena Erickson – 52” x 44” - (132cm × 112cm) - acrylic on canvas**

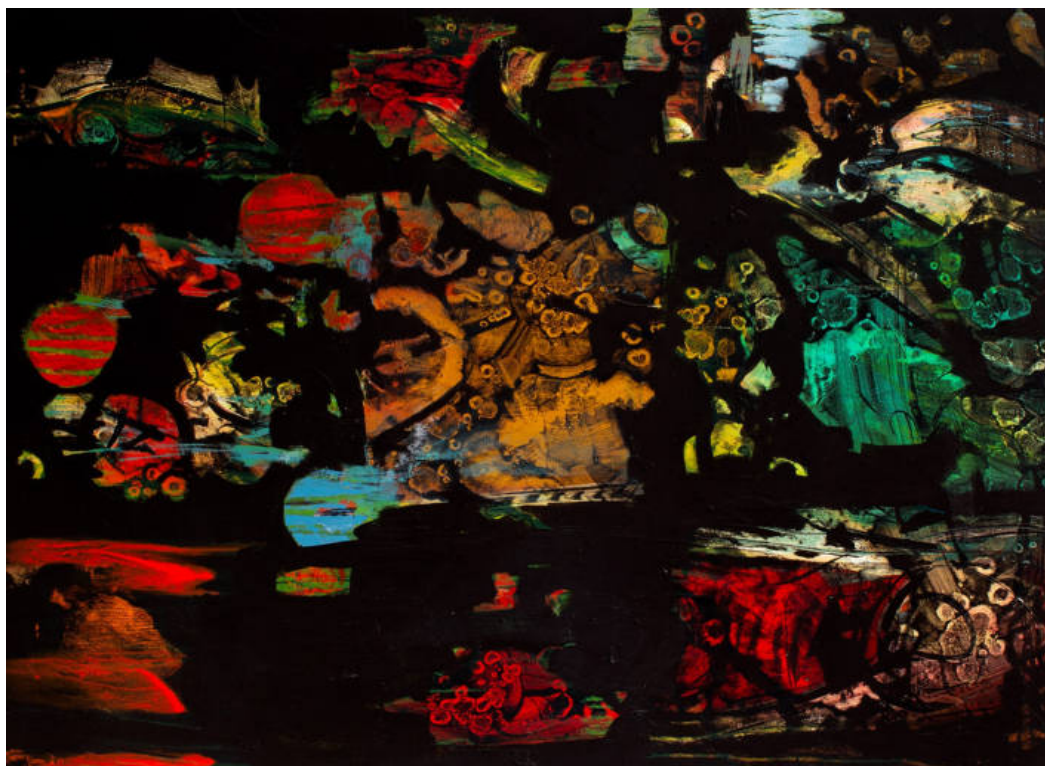


Apollo - Mark Erickson - 54" x 54" (137cm x 137cm) - acrylic on canvas





**Liquid Landscape - Mark Erickson - 38" x 58" (97cm x 147cm) - acrylic on canvas**



**Night Reflections - Mark Erickson - 36" x 48" (92cm x 122cm) - acrylic on canvas**

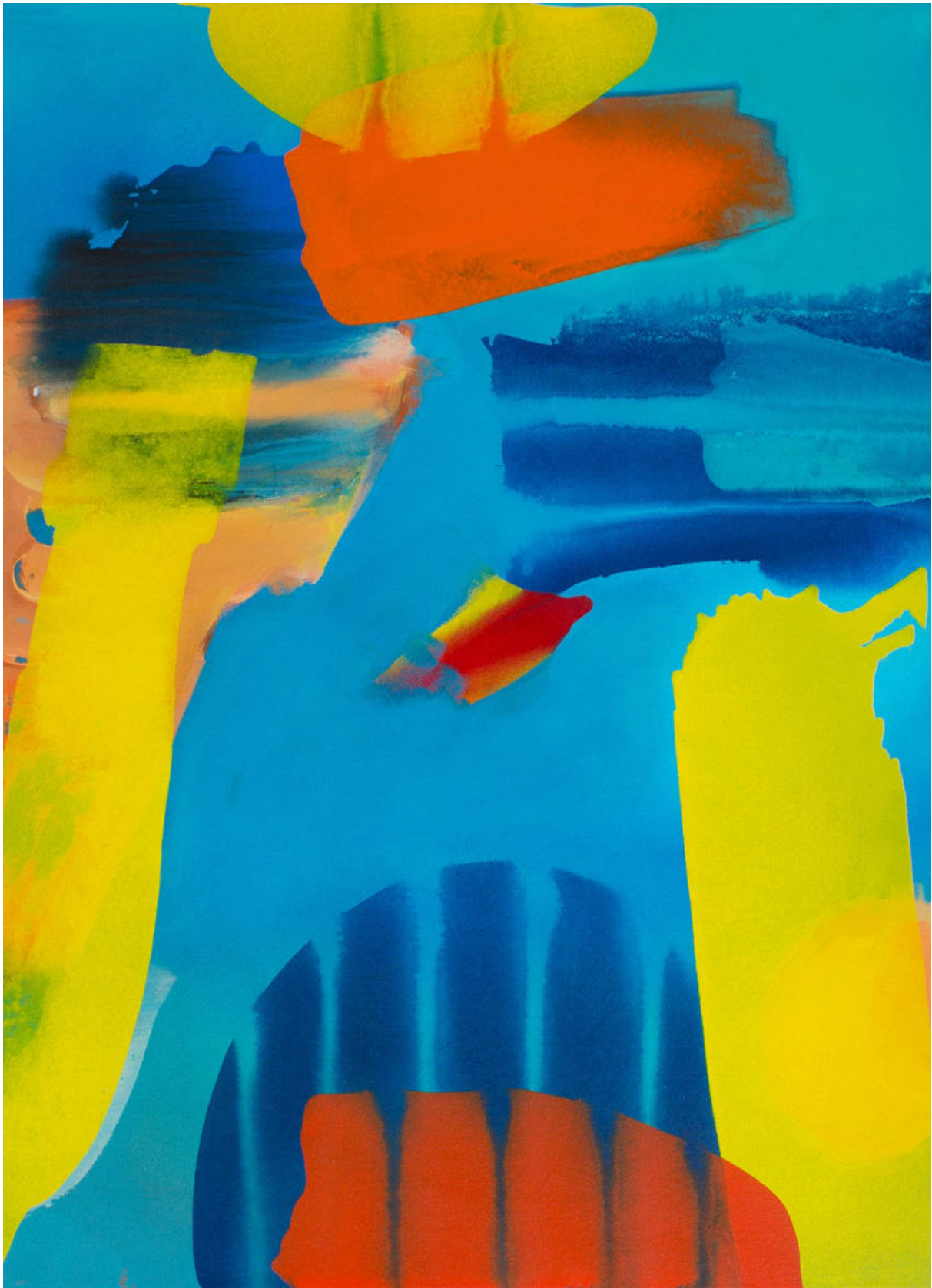


The Morning Shadows Rush Towards Each Other - Mark & Elena Erickson – 36" x 48" (92cm x 122cm) - acrylic on canvas



The Highlands - Mark Erickson - 48" x 58" (122cm x 147cm) - acrylic on canvas





Tulagi - Mark Erickson - 44" x 34" (112cm x 86cm) - acrylic on canvas





Swept In From The Clouds - Mark Erickson - 42" x 32" (107cm x 81cm) - acrylic on canvas





Through The Treeline IV - Elena Erickson – 52” x 44” (132cm × 112cm) - acrylic on canvas





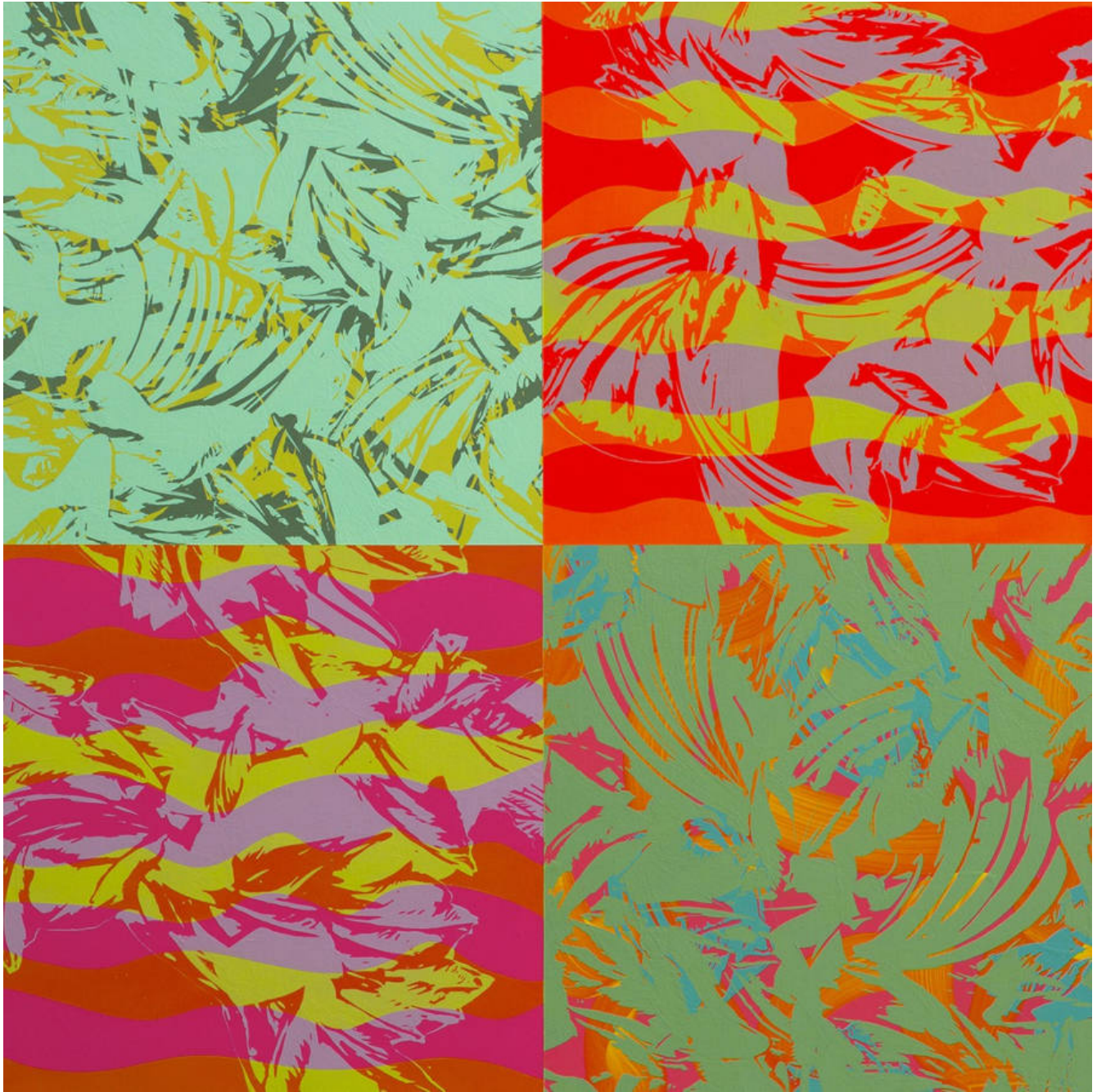
**Sundown II - Elena Erickson - 52" × 44" (132cm × 112cm) - acrylic on canvas**





Birdwire I & II & III & IV (Quartet) - Elena Erickson – 62" x 46" (158cm x 117cm) - acrylic on paper





**Milky Way - Elena Erickson – 38” x 38” (97cm x 97cm) - acrylic on canvas**





**Costa Brava - Elena Erickson - 36" x 66" (92cm x 168cm) - acrylic on canvas**



**In the Red Shadows of the Trees - Elena & Mark Erickson - 50" x 50" (127cm x 127cm) - acrylic on canvas**





**Scenes Through a Train Window III + IV - Elena Erickson - 48" × 120" (122 × 305cm) - acrylic on canvas**



**Memories To Begin II - Elena Erickson – 30" x 22" (76cm x 56cm) - acrylic on paper**



Setting Suns - Elena Erickson – 46” x 36” (117 x 91cm) - acrylic on canvas





**The Distant Hills - Elena Erickson - 30" x 22" (76cm x 56cm) - acrylic on paper**



**Two Tone One - Elena Erickson - 22" x 30" (56cm x 76cm) - acrylic on paper**



**Summer Bird - Elena Erickson – 50" x 60" (127cm x 152cm) - acrylic on canvas**





Mercury Night - Mark Erickson – 48” x 36” (122cm x 92cm) - acrylic on wood panel





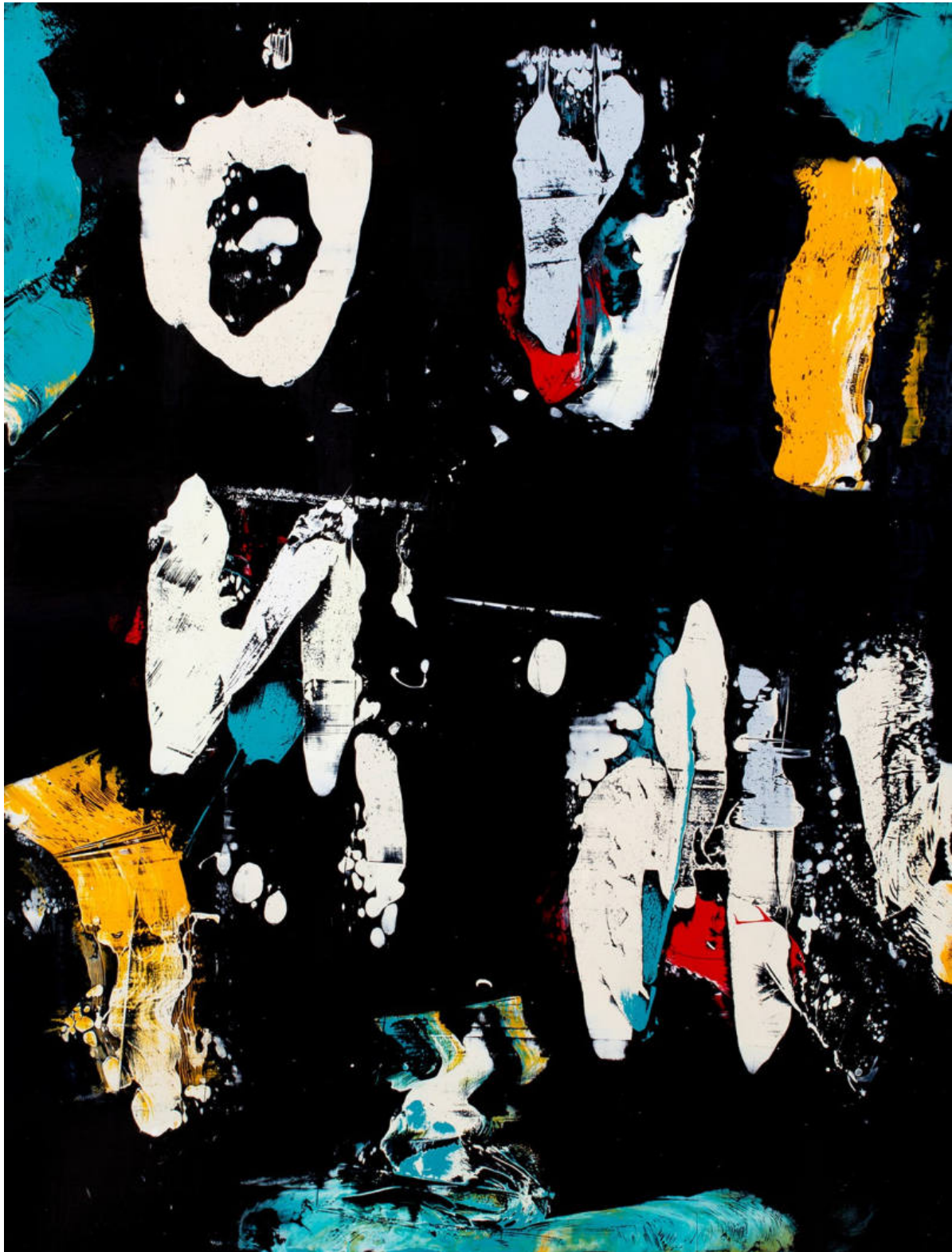
The River Parlor - Mark Erickson – 42" x 32" (107cm x 81cm) - acrylic on canvas





Shadow Factory - Mark Erickson – 40" x 30" (102 x 76cm) - acrylic on canvas





**The Past Before Me - Mark Erickson – 40" x 30" (102 x 76cm) - acrylic on metal / wood panel**





Munich - Mark Erickson – 48” x 36” (122 x 92cm) - acrylic on metal / wood panel





Hightower - Mark Erickson – 48" x 36" (122 x 92cm) - acrylic on metal / wood panel





**Silvio Dante II - Mark Erickson – 38” x 30” (97cm x 72cm) - acrylic on canvas**

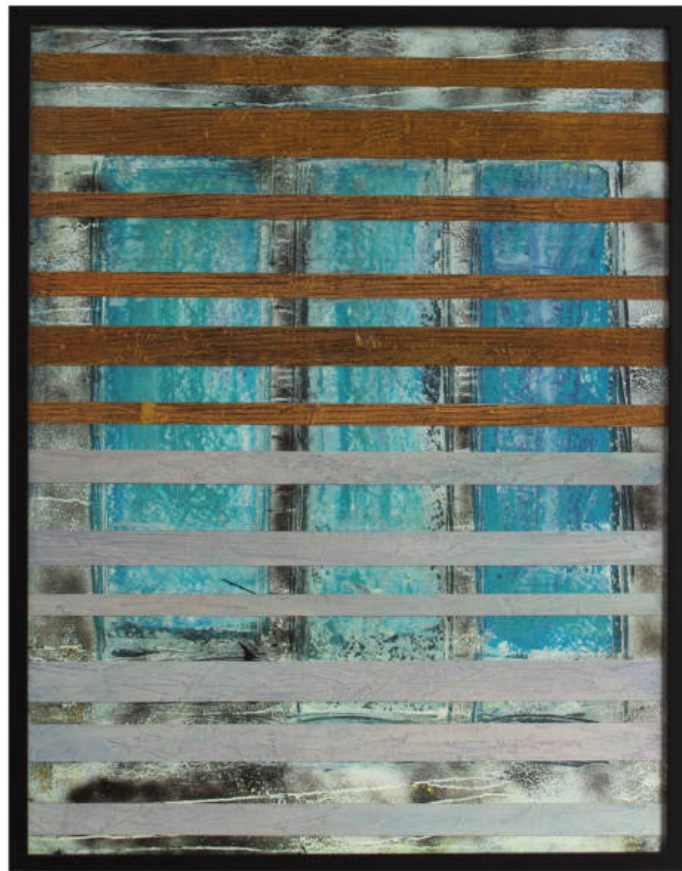


**Blast I - Elena Erickson – 46” x 36” (117cm x 92cm) - acrylic on canvas**





Excavation V & VI (Diptych) - Elena Erickson – 54” x 90” (137cm x 229cm) – acrylic on canvas



Blue Windows - Mark & Elena Erickson – 41” x 31” (104cm x 79cm) – acrylic on wood panel (framed)

## **Series Descriptions**

### **Color & Revision Series - Mark Erickson**

My work can be viewed as traditional abstract painting, but others see pure abstraction mixing with imagery. I slip in humorous aspects, cartoonish shapes & landscapes enabling me to have freedom to experiment with paint, collage and drawing. My interests in literature, history and music are incorporated to their fullest potential in my paintings. In the series 'Color & Revision,' one witnesses scurrying images & resurrected ideas. Notations of the present lead to each new canvas & in that I can find how past efforts can create new works that are exciting to me and the collector. I want viewers to see things, experience a moment in my painting where their imagination can take off in new directions. Whether it's an illusion of depth, something lyrical or the impact of color and shape, I seek to keep the eye moving around the canvas. Collage elements are sometimes added to take the painting into another arena. The need to feel something that may not be there at first glance, but to know it is there is the key.

### **Expansion in Motion Series - Elena Erickson**

I have been actively exploring the series called 'Expansion in Motion'. These works radiate an openness and a feeling of expansion. With that thought, the shapes, outlines and silhouettes unfold, stretch and overlay across the entire canvas surface in a continuous pattern. Some aspects of my thought process while creating these works go back to my appreciation of Matisse's fabric and tapestry designs and his unique influences on painting. I often lean towards vivid color combinations in my choice of how to lay out the compositions. Each painting leads the eye to multiple perspectives and color stimulation, both in hypnotic variations and simple recognizable images. One can view the outlines and silhouettes expanding in a muralistic decoration, as if a landscape seen from a distance. Static energy pulsates off the canvas as the explosive colors dance rhythmically to their own expression. Each individual canvas becomes an interwoven story of color and impact.

### **Windows In Motion Series - Elena Erickson**

There is a pure energy, intense colors and sunlight shooting through the Windows in Motion paintings. Like reflections forming when looking out a train window as it passes a myriad of shapes and impressions, creating light shards and images through the cut glass. Or they can be viewed as through a Cathedral stained glass window, with backlit outlines dancing in the skylights. One can also find elements of nature. Growing up in the countryside, spending countless hours in the forest and the farmlands, nature was and is a big influence in my painting. Shapes of leaves and foliage, light fractions and glimmers from the distant trees become noticeable. Then later as the city became part of my life, an Urban atmosphere takes hold, a film-like vision unfolds when taking the streetcar or subway across town. Imagery rattling by, impressions entering the mind, creating yet another story line. As this train moves in motion you can look out the window and enjoy the steady flow of images passing.

### **Mercury Series - Mark Erickson**

Illumination floats against the imaginary black as coal galaxy. Influenced by the flat colors and text balloons of comic books, the paint is peeled back from the inside and split down the middle as you might attempt separating a piece of paper through to the center of its core. I exaggerate the effect, creating a composition that overtakes the imagery. I dramatize the aerial feeling/floating effect, letting them shine in an eye popping arena before the black plane. The surface is as smooth, as sliding your fingers along the cool metal skin of stainless steel. A shared passion for the Mercury space program with my Father Ernest Anders Erickson, an Air Corps bomber pilot during the Second World War and recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross, was the doorway to the series. During the design of the Mercury spacecraft my father worked as a stress analyst and later was chosen to work with the top-secret division of Lockheed Aircraft and their Skunk Works Project. The Mercury Series features bright organic shapes, that hover weightlessly over a field of black, subtly suggesting figures and objects floating in the dark, the still expanse of space.



## **MARK ERICKSON**

Born in Hollywood, California  
Studios in Oakland & Venice, CA

MFA Painting – San Francisco Art Institute  
BFA Painting – San Francisco Art Institute  
University of San Francisco, CA  
San Francisco Art Academy  
Rome International School – Torino, Italy  
Munich, Germany Military School

## **ELENA ERICKSON**

Born in Safenwil, Switzerland  
Studios in Oakland & Venice, CA

Apprenticeship / Degree in Fashion Retailing & Design - Olten, Switzerland  
Apprenticeship In Studio Arts, Painting & History – Oakland, California

