



SUSAN ENGLISH

STATEMENT

*PERIPHERY*

*Color like a thought that grows out of a mood...*

- Wallace Stevens

Periphery is defined as the outer limit or edge of a place or an object, an area lying beyond the strict limit of a thing. The word implies an inside and an outside, a dropping off point, a point beyond which one can go no further. I am drawn to expansive spaces where the horizon is an edge or periphery, where I begin to sense the potential of dropping off that edge, an edge that might be perceived only indirectly or unconsciously. These ideas of space, boundaries, and perception are at the core of my current body of work.

My color choices represent an intersection of the inside and the outside. Often a color idea comes from an experience of a place or moment in time. As a point of departure, this enters the internal world of a painting and begins a life of its own. Inside the highly charged relational realm of color, my responses and choices are visual, emotional and intuitive.

I play with the phenomenon of a color at the limit of itself. How far can green be pushed before it becomes blue? How many infinite directions can you push a brown or a gray or a white? In this peripheral area of color, colors hum in multiple ways like a harmony contained in a single note. There are many clichés about the emotions colors represent but for me a color can communicate in all kinds of way and any one color, say red, can be joyous, morose, bloody, angry, buoyant and so on. As William Gass says in *On Being Blue*; “the sense of vibrancy, feeling and vision, we take away from any work is the result of the intermingling, balance, play and antagonism between colors. It is the arrangement of blues, not any blue itself which lets us see the mood it formulates...”

I am intrigued by what is on the edge of human perception, where known meets unknown. What surrounds me inevitably makes its way into my work—whether it be the particular quality of light on any given day, the dominant colors of a season, or simply memories of a place existing in the periphery of my consciousness.

A note on my process:

In the last decade, I have developed a process of pouring layers of tinted polymer on panel that has expanded the breadth of what I can achieve with color and surface in my abstract works. After pouring the tinted polymer I manipulate the panel so the paint collects or cracks. The poured polymer mimics nature: a layer of polymer hardens like ice or mud—its thickness and viscosity impacting how the surface dries. The variations on the surface and the quality of the color are the result of a delicate and flexible relationship between control and accident. I assemble the poured panels into specifically

calibrated horizontal or vertical sequences, creating a narrative of color, space and light. The surfaces range from dull to glossy, either absorbing or reflecting the light, existing always in relationship to the light in the room or the position of the viewer.