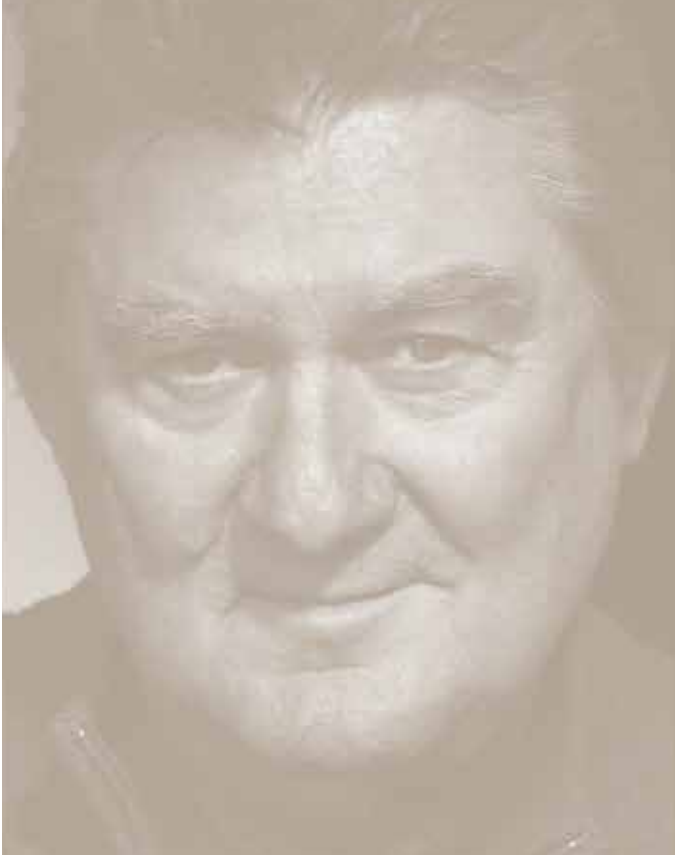


JAMES SURLS



Several years ago, Charmaine and I were attending an International Sculpture Center Gala in New York, where there were several sculpture students from the east coast in attendance. One of these students, a graduate student from a powerful MFA program, came up to me and asked, "Mr. Surls, do you touch your art?" I was taken back a bit by the question, but after a few moments of thought on the question, I understood why she would ask. It is because there are those among us who do not touch their art.

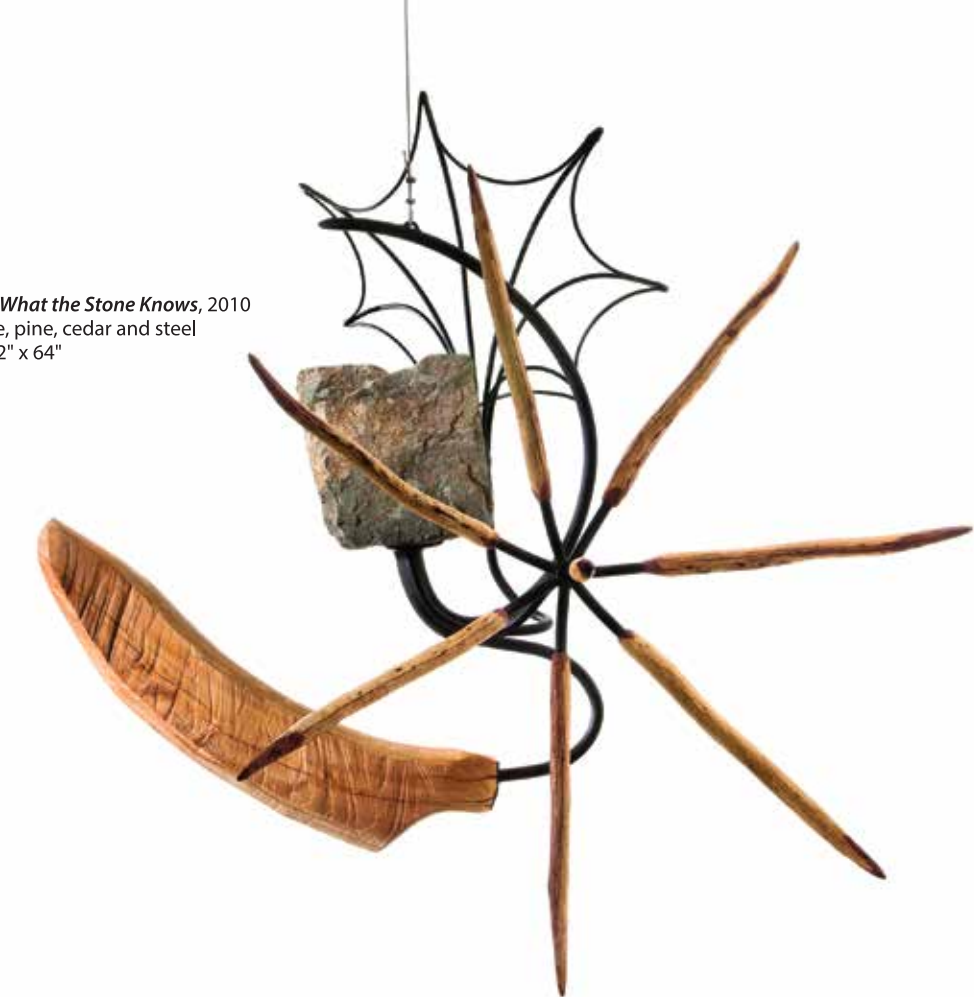
I watched and listened to an interview with the great writer Edmond Morris a few weeks ago, and the question was put to him, "What is the biggest issue in writing today?" His answer was very close to being, "that no one touches their art." He talked about students who relate to a digital image of a landscape more than they do the real landscape. He spoke of how their mind is now being geared or programmed to a flat screen rather than an object in space.

This exhibition is about the touch: a slow hand exercising the visualizations of thought, of taking the intangible through the process of pushing and pulling with a sensitive touch as to meaning. Meaning: that which gives content to the viewer. Content: that which speaks a clear language for all to hear. Listening and hearing takes effort. One must be still and quiet, not an easy task in the age of digital flashing. All of the art in this exhibition is made from scratch. Like a homemade cake, it is made with love and ingredients picked from the landscape. "Knowing What the Stone Knows," to understand the knowledge living inside a stone that has been rolled and tumbled for millions of years is easy and difficult in equal measure. All the signs and clues are there. One must simply find the markers on the path through to the center.

Art will always speak the truth. Art will not lie. Art gives you all that you need to understand it. The issue of "not understanding the art" does not live inside the art; it lives inside the spectator. The question is, how ready are you to have a conversation with an object, giving it the full ability to converse with you? To tell you the truth, few are ready to have such a conversation. But for the ones who are, the stakes are high and the rewards are many. I will say I personally appreciate any and all who stand before my art with the questions, ready to ask: Art, what are you? What are you saying to me? Why do you expect me to look at you for this extended period of time? Look through the art to what is beyond. It will then speak a clear language and one that will tell you what you need.



Well Water, 1991
linocut
39.5" x 53"



Knowing What the Stone Knows, 2010
riverstone, pine, cedar and steel
102" x 102" x 64"

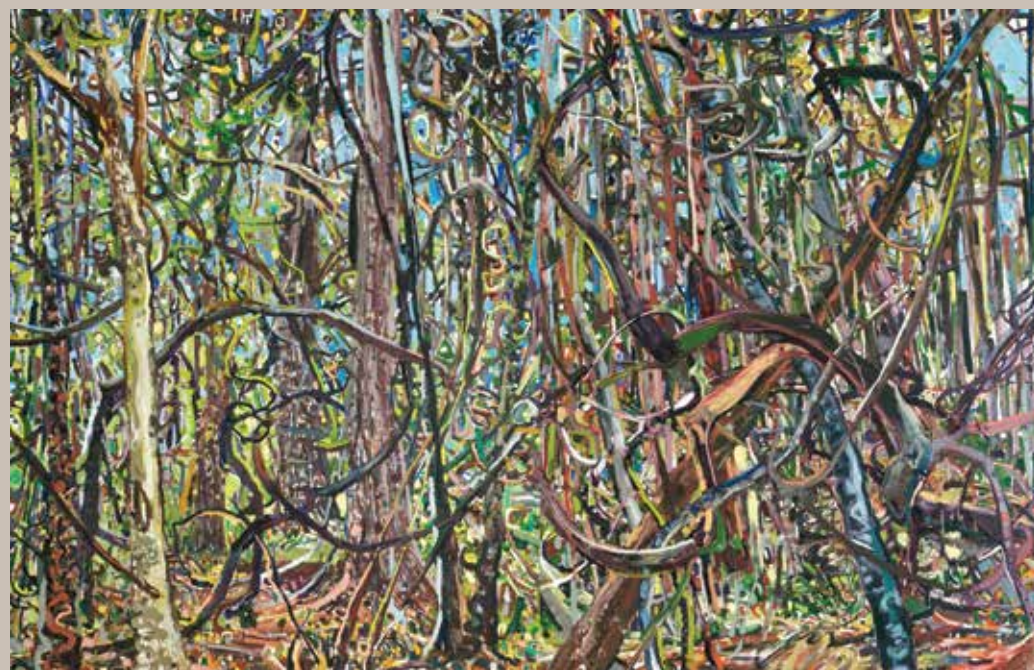
LILIAN GARCIA-ROIG



I believe in the power of extended looking and suspended thinking as a means to discover things that might otherwise go unnoticed. I believe in the cumulative effects of small actions. The longer I look, the more I see and my "all-day" plein-air paintings have become documents of a real-time process: the accumulation of fleeting moments, the experience of the day.

Time-Sensitive is primarily a selection of my recent paintings and subsequent groupings from several areas I have worked at extensively including Northern Florida, Cascades Mountains in Washington State and New Hampshire & Northern Georgia during the autumn. Many works in this show are from two on-going series: *Cumulative Nature* and *Hyperbolic Nature*. These series represent the first groups of large-scale paintings that I produced over the course of the entire day, in a wet-on-wet, cumulative painting manner rather than over multiple half-day sessions as I had been doing before. This seemingly subtle shift was the result of my desiring more, rather than less, change in light and colors on my subject and thus placing more of an emphasis on the "performative" nature of my on-site painting practice. I find the passing of time and the changing of light to be essential and welcome elements in the creation of my works. While painting, I continuously focus in and out at various depths. As the light changes over time, different features become highlighted, come to my attention, and are recorded on the canvas. This method achieves an expanded sense of space and time in my work by evoking more than is naturally seen at a single glance. Since I am integrating many moments, my process is more like that of an actor who knows her characters (color/space/shape) and script (changing light) and uses each performance to discover another nuance.

In a virtualized world, one could consider perceptual plein-air painting to be an act of defiance. As *passé* as it may seem to some, my current postmodern plein-air painting practice is both relevant and potent to me. I believe that the very act of making and viewing perceptually based, plein-air painting invites discourse on our own ability to have a meaningful, even sublime experience of nature today. As I continue to work in and with nature, I think about what Thoreau said: "You must live in the present, launch yourself on every wave, find your eternity in each moment." There is a similar imperative and urgency about my paintings. There is a strong sense in my works that nature is intoxicatingly near and yet unreachable... just out of one's grasp. Nature won't settle down, be passive, or ever fully reveal itself. But, at the same time, it will offer us more than we seek. I can only hope my paintings can do the same.



Hyperbolic Nature: Florida Vines (diptych), 2008
oil on canvas
60" x 96"



Hambidge Autumn (GA) (diptych), 2011
oil on canvas
48" x 72"