

## Portrait of the Artist

# Ancient structures form abstract language in works of Greg Slick

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*Editor's note: Portrait of the Artist is a regular feature in Enjoy! that spotlights artists with exhibits in the Hudson Valley. If you are an artist in a current or upcoming exhibit and would like to be included in this feature, email bfarrell@poughkeepsiejournal.com. This week's Portrait of the Artist features Greg Slick, whose work is on display at Matteawan Gallery in Beacon until June 4.*

**Tell us about your art on display at Matteawan Gallery and what inspired you to select it for the show.**

"Fieldwork" showcases recent paintings, works on paper and sculpture. It explores the crossroads of art, science and history. Since all of the pieces are thematically related and work so well together, the owner/curator of Matteawan Gallery and I agreed that this body of work would make a compelling exhibition.

**Do you stick to a certain theme in your work or like to explore new techniques and subjects?**

I stick to focused investigations in my work, the overlap of art, archaeology and anthropology being a longstanding obsession. However, I do experiment with new techniques and materials. Right now I'm messing around with found stone for my 3-D pieces.

**How have archaeology and anthropology influenced your work? Did it evolve from your recent artist residency in Ireland?**

For over a decade I've been developing a lexicon of imagery that owes much to influences such as Chinese painting and calligraphy, Neolithic structures and early geometric abstraction. My current work is the outcome of an artist's residency at the Burren College of Art in Ballyvaughan, Ireland (October, 2013). A lot of what I'm doing, with painting especially, both isolates the dilapidated features of certain ancient structures — dolmens, wedge tombs, ring forts, cairns — and translates those features into an abstract language.

**Do you think creative individuals like yourself perceive the world differently from other people?**

We make it our business to look at and continue looking at things way past the point where most people might lose interest. It's amazing what the world reveals to you when you don't avert your gaze.

**What do you hope viewers come away with after seeing your work?**

A sense of mystery and wonder. Greater curiosity about our collective past. And an aesthetic connection to ancestral imagery.

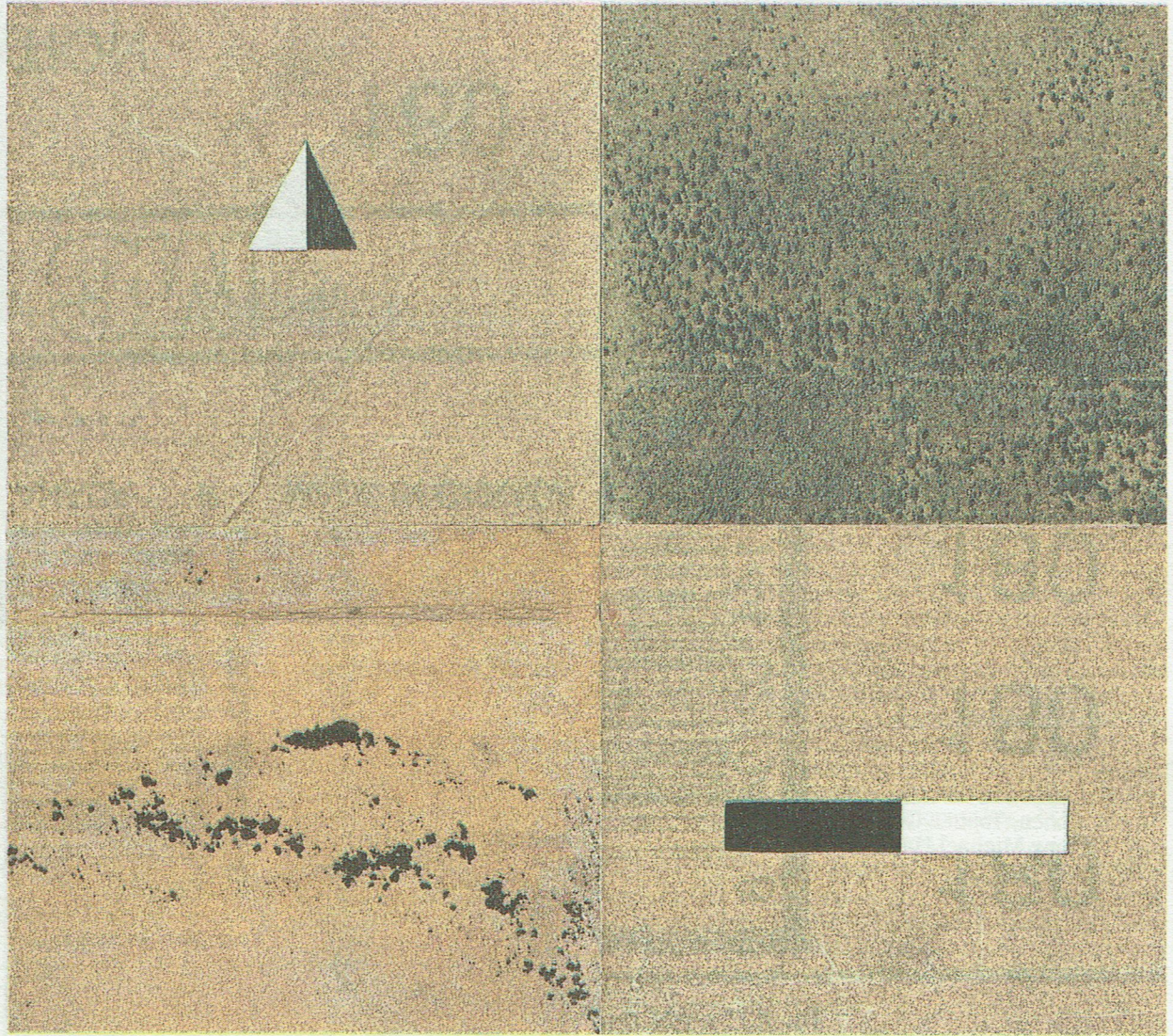
**Do you see yourself in your artwork? How?**

I wonder about the long ancestry that has made me who I am. So, I see the references to archaeology and anthropology in my art as a metaphor for exhuming and re-experiencing our cultural past.

**How have you handled the business side of being an artist?**

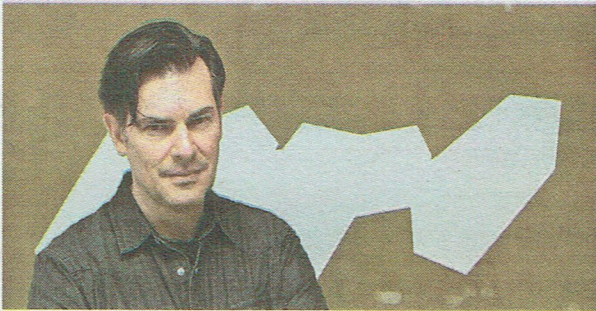
Not very well, apparently. I still have a day job! What I do try to do diligently is to have good, professional relations with gallery owners, curators, art center staff and collectors. Artists and the people who endeavor to show and collect artists' work need to have solidarity.

**How does your background contribute to your**



COURTESY PHOTOS

Above, "Fieldwork" by Greg Slick, at left.



**process as an artist?**

I grew up in a family where art, music and literature were super important. As a kid I spent a lot of time going to museums. When I went to visit my family in Spain, for example, I practically lived in the Prado and other museums, as well as in an assortment of medieval castles and ancient sites.

**What excites you about art — what keeps you interested?**

The transformative power of art and its ability to change the world are what stir my blood. Let's face it, when we are talking about cutting-edge, contemporary art so much is at stake. Not only is the future of art at stake, but our culture across the board. That is to say, how will we define ourselves as makers of things and ideas in years to come? Well, art is a main influencer.

**What is the intention of your creations?**

Mainly, I want to have a dialogue with contemporary art. But I don't want that dialogue to be for an exclusive audience. Right now, I'm showing my work in a public venue. I would hope that people from all walks of life would come to see my work and share in the dialogue. We can all learn from each other.

Beacon resident Greg Slick has exhibited nationally and internationally. In September, he will be an artist in residence at the Saltonstall Foundation for the Arts in Ithaca. Visit <http://www.gregslickart.com/>