



ART IN NATURE

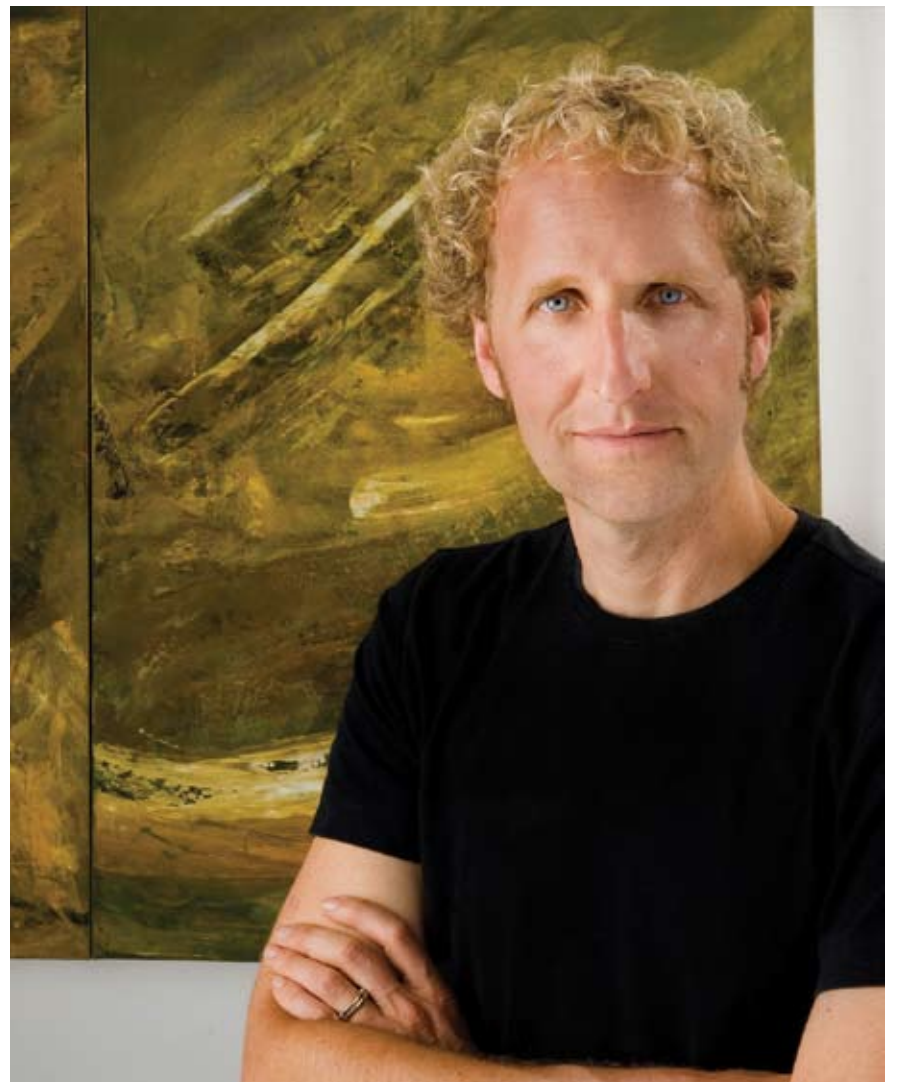
Adam Wolpert, artist and ecological activist, explains the beauty in nature, and relates how he developed into the fascinating artist he has become.

By Cristina Ordoqui

Beauty, grace, elegance, and—for some—inspiration exist in all natural processes. Even within destructive ones, such as hurricanes and tornados, a powerful beauty is present for anyone to observe, as long as they look for it.

Adam Wolpert does this every day. His life-long commitment to nature, and exploring the beauty within it, has led him to create intriguing art that offers a new gateway through which the public may view nature.

Wolpert was a passionate artist at an early age. He studied fine arts at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where he received his B.A. He then moved to Florence, Italy, to study at the Studio Cecil-Graves where he soon discovered his work's inspirational foundation in the Italian Renaissance. He later spent time in the Himalayas and with the indigenous people of the





Andes. In 1992, he returned to California to earn his M.F.A. at the University of California, San Diego. Immediately following the completion of his studies, he and a group of friends started the Occidental Arts and Ecology Center, where Wolpert still lives and works today.

The OAEC is an intentional community, non-profit educational institute, and organic farm in Northern California's Sonoma County. There, biologists, horticulturists, artists, and educators work together to create ecologically, economically, and culturally sustainable communities that are democratic, and serve as a counterpoint to privatized and corporatized society. At the OAEC, Wolpert works on his own art, serves as the director of the arts program, and teaches landscape painting.

Throughout his artistic career, Wolpert has never abandoned the passion that first attracted him to this lifestyle. He has always worked within the realm of landscapes, but within the last two years (and especially throughout his newest series), his view of nature has delved into an exciting new approach: abstraction. With that, a whole new perspective emerged—one that he says is filled with endless possibilities. His most recent series, *New Works 2008*, is a collection of untitled abstractions created concurrently within a color palette of blue, green, mustard, and chocolate tones. "It's a bit of a mystery that way," notes Wolpert, explaining that any given piece can take a week or as much as a year to complete. The series is composed of six works, and Wolpert has also created a triptych (a work of art divided into three sections or panels) collection containing six more pieces in the same style and color palate.

"As I work in the terrain between abstraction and representation," he explains, "ambiguous images emerge and then recede into the paint. Using brush, palette knife, hands, and fingers, classical technique encounters finger painting as I push deeper into the process and become more sensitive

to the medium and its many voices. Atmospheric landscapes give way to shadowy figures that can, in turn, dissolve into abstract patterns of energy each informing the other. In this way, a dance of creation and destruction accompanies the genesis of each work. Elements are lost and found again, or unearthed, when thick paint is scraped away."

Stylistic variation and dramatic breadth of scale brand Wolpert's work, and he explains that although he has been working with the nature theme for the past 20 years, it is still as exciting as it ever was. New scenes and inspirations present themselves daily, and because his workspace changes with the seasons (from plein air landscaping to studio work, where improvisation and imagination take over), Wolpert is able to show the public what the world looks like through his mind's eye. His dialogue with the OAEC's gardens and wildlands is expressed in his paintings, and invites the viewer to recall his or her own capacity to relate to a beautiful place.

Outside of OAEC, Wolpert has exhibited his work throughout several galleries within his home state, including many solo exhibitions and group shows. Most recently, his work has been displayed at the Jan Baum Gallery in Los Angeles. His passion for classical training and technical integrity has led him to teach at numerous universities throughout California, lecture on sustainable communities, and lead painting workshops in several West Coast venues, as well as in British Columbia, Canada.

However, Wolpert has reached a pivotal point in his career. After leaving his representation of 18 years, he is excited about what new adventures lay ahead. He is interested in expanding to the East Coast and showing within the Miami and New York art scenes, and receiving new inspirations from these locales. For Wolpert, it all comes down to patience, as he waits for the perfect opportunity to showcase his natural and magical artistic genius. 🌿