

**ARIE A. GALLES**  
**ARTIST'S STATEMENT**

**"HEARTLAND" SERIES OF REFLECTED-LIGHT PAINTINGS**  
**AESTHETICS AND TECHNIQUE**

In these, as in previous reflected-light paintings, I work with light. I work with the glowing radiation of fluorescent color reflected onto a plain white surface. My pieces consist of extruded, aluminum rods, (trapezoidal in cross section), with their rearward-angled sides painted in saturated colors, mounted on a canvas backing. The painting is in the form of a code, with lengths of various hues corresponding to a stripe of colored light reflection being created adjacent to it. Each rod represents a vertical segment of a composition recognizable only when all its elements are mounted and perceived as a totality. The light-image, as viewed from the front, floats, shimmering over the surface of the canvas. This image is nonphysical, it exists in the gaps between the extrusions. Its an image created in, and of, the shadows of the rods, an "Anti-Shadow." The viewer is constantly involved in the contradiction between paint and light, the paradox between the physical and the perceptual sensations of seeing.

In the past my iconography ranged from strictly formalistic to geometric or figurative themes, but in the "Heartland" series I found the ideal synthesis of subject and technique. The aerial landscapes are pure light, and in essence, pure illusion. The floating point of view is reinforced by the ethereal effect of the light, and the distance is echoed in the hazy soft edged shapes which the reflected color creates.

I was first attracted to this imagery on cross country flights, noticing how the organic contours of the landscape below were suddenly defined and given scale by the intrusion of roads and fields: the methodical hand of Humanity on the abstract earth. Sometimes clouds would intervene, imposing their own chaotic pattern in white, haze and shadow. And at night rivers became silver threads reflecting moonlight. My mages challenge the perception of the viewer to a game of hide-and-seek while exploring the permutations of geometric, organic and winding patterns. These in turn are superimposed by the white grid of vertical strips of the aluminum extrusions. This grid simultaneously divides the colors while heightening the perception of reflected light.

The iconography in these paintings evolve through a number of color studies in oil pastels, works of art in their own right, culminating in full scale cartoons. The cartoons are created as mirror images of the completed works painted on the sides of the extrusions. They are translated into strips of color information on the rear spines of the extrusions, and the physical paint is transferred onto the side surfaces of the aluminum rods with sable brushes. I can only observe the creation of each painting as a series of almost digital elements of color. The intensely hued two dimensional surface of the cartoons don't actually evolve into my finished pieces. Rather, by being painted on the aluminum extrusions, they metamorphose into the unique three dimensional instruments resonating with luminosity.

Some artists use light to expose the hidden cracks and flaws of our world. In my reflected-light painting I, on the other hand, use light to reveal a universe full of vibrant color. In my works the painted surfaces of themselves do not connote a visual sensation; they are, however, the source of the reflected light that brings the luminous image into existence.