

Chris Gwaltney

Chris Gwaltney's work might be thought of as poetry as opposed to prose. He builds and sketches on the canvas, taking away what is unnecessary, paring down and crystallizing the visual language. In that way, and in his interest in color relations, he might be compared to Milton Avery, although he is more likely to cite artists like Diebenkorn, Oliveira and Joan Mitchell, with a nod to Cy Twombly for his mark-making. For Gwaltney, the figure is expressed as a gesture, a presence simply articulated with line and stroke, often seen as walking alone or in relation to one or more figures. He begins with making smears or marks on the canvas. Gwaltney once said, "some paintings are a conversation, others are an argument." Through the process of painting, he sets up situations that seek resolution in the work. In the end, the work becomes "a testament to time well spent."

Born in Van Nuys, California Gwaltney began painting full time after an injury restricted him to crutches for a year and a half at the age of 23. He received his BA and Masters from the University of California State Fullerton.

For Gwaltney, gestures and their implied emotions are more important than pure representation and finish. Gwaltney has used his entire family as source material; from the growth of his children, the resiliency and strength of his wife to the passing of both his father and his father-in-law. He feels these relationships are the most honest way to express layered emotion. Gwaltney's process is one of construction and then deconstruction, "I'm a better editor than I am an inventor. I'll paint in many figures and let them fight it out." He allows for the underlying sketches, the "original argument", to show through in the end result. Gwaltney likes to think that, "a painting is a testament to time well spent."