



think
GLOBALLY
make art
LOCALLY

Alumni respond to environmental phenomena and wonder if this is the end of the world as we know it

Sloat Shaw (Diploma '89, Fifth Year Certificate '90) takes a more literal approach to illustrate the changing world: she paints the always awesome force of the earth. "As water washes over the land and eruptions crack the earth open, what once seemed stable and unchanging is drastically altered," she says. About sixteen years ago, Shaw began to cut her many-layered paintings, insert gauze, and stitch them back together. "The world isn't whole," she says. "Slashing the canvas deeper seems to expose what we choose to ignore: our dependence upon the earth and the interdependence of all life."

Shaw says there's a "break in the way humanity regards the earth" yet she doesn't understand why or how this happened. "There seems to be a disconnect between what we do as a culture and what we believe individually," she says. "Our actions are out of sync even though we all acknowledge the need to breathe clean air, drink pure water, and plant our food in uncontaminated earth."

Not until the lights go out, the phone is dead, and the planes are grounded, Shaw says, are we reminded of our relation to the elements, and the power of the environment and the many phenomena—natural and human-made—that continue to shape it. "As I paint the earth, and the constant change of the earth," Shaw says, "I am painting the cycle of renewal and transformation."

As alumni artists engage with the environment, the manifestation of paint on canvas or pencil on paper will continue to draw its power from sudden violent storms and sobering encounters with dwindling species. And as Shaw says in words that echo many others' sometimes the act of art making itself is a necessary catalyst for change on a global level. "Each person is a layering of hopes and dreams, and sometimes we get busy or tired and find it harder to remember that we have hidden layers aching to be uncovered," she says. "I hope my paintings remind people of their own complex nature and their own depths of possibility." ♦



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—Sloat Shaw, Diploma '89, Fifth Year Certificate '90