

👁️ This is a preview of your viewing room.



# Artist Interview CONVERSATIO DANIEL DUF

Mark Moore Fine Art

Statement

Works

We caught up with artist Daniel Duford in his Portland studio as he worked on his latest series, "American Underland." Through paintings, drawings, and sculptures, Duford explores the deep, ancient history of America and its impact on the present. His works reveal the spirit and energy that resides in living land through an animist lens. Here's a glimpse into our conversation with Duford.



Daniel Duford  
Paisley Caves I, 2024  
US\$15,000





Daniel Duford  
Paisley Caves 2, 2024  
US\$15,000

[View works \(7\)](#)

---

**“Duford, as Bard and artist... reminds us that myth has something vital to say about the condition of our lives and the status of our Earth.”**

# - Linda Tesner, independent curator and writer

The works making up the series “American Underland” are meditations on deep, geologic time and its gravitational pull on history. The works—comprising landscapes, large narrative drawings and ceramic sculptures—arise from the tangled myth and history of American land. They are attempts to reveal the crackling, animist life that exists in the rocks, trees and memories of the land. The works are meant to address the larger-than-human from an almost shamanic perspective.

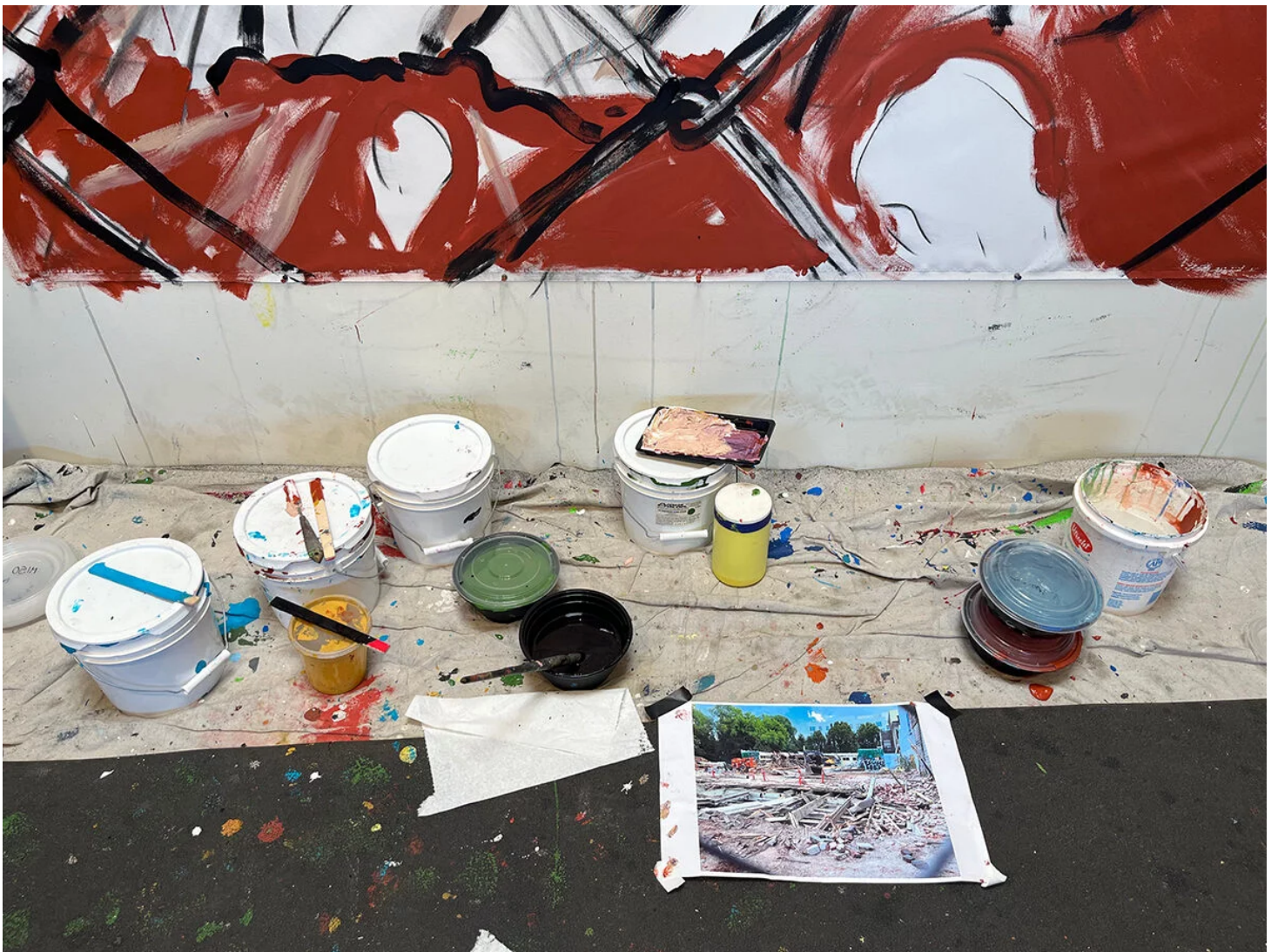
The motifs filling "American Underland" are the Janus head, coyotes, the Tarot and landscapes. Janus is the Roman god of doorways, of ending and beginnings. The double faced god presided over city gates marking times of war and peace. Old Man Coyote, too, has many faces. His stories are bawdy, absurd and alive with the electricity of a living landscape. The landscapes are made up of caves, fallen trees and entrances into the underworld. These are core samples into the chthonic energies rumbling beneath the ground and lava flows animating the collective unconscious of the nation. These works comprise an exhibition that opens on September 17, 2024 at the Archer Gallery at Clark College in Vancouver, Washington.

For 20 years, Daniel Duford has woven visual narratives — stories that flow

through large paintings, graphic novels, installations and figurative sculpture. His work is born from the mythic and political history of North America. He is a 2019 Guggenheim Fellow, a 2010 Hallie Ford Fellow and a 2012 Art Matters Grant recipient. His work has been exhibited nationally including MASS MOCA, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at PSU, Orange County Museum of Art and the Boise Art Museum. His writing has appeared in Artweek, ART news, High Desert Journal and Parabola among others. In 2011 he published *Wellspring: Poems 1996-2006*. His current writing can be found on "The Whole Live Animal" at [danielford.substack.com](http://danielford.substack.com). His curatorial projects include the 2012 exhibition "Fighting Men: Leon Golub, Jack Kirby, Peter Voulkos" at the Hoffman Gallery at Lewis and Clark College and "An Earth Song, A Body Song: Figures with Landscapes" and "Works from the Permanent Collection" (2020) at Orange County Museum of Art. He is Visiting Professor of Art at Reed College. He is Creative Director of BUILDING FIVE in Portland, Oregon.

## Where does the title American Underland come from?

"American Underland" is the title of my new exhibition at Archer Gallery at Clark College in Vancouver, Washington. I borrowed the term "underland" from the British writer Robert MacFarlane. His explorations of places under the surface of the earth are examinations of deep time.



**This show opens up just before a very consequential presidential election.**

This is my first large solo show since my exhibition "John Brown's Vision on the Scaffold" in 2020 at The Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at PSU. That exhibition was directly engaged in the political history unfolding during the last year of the Trump era. It closed after a week because of covid. This time around, I knew that again the work will be up during a consequential election. I wanted to address the deep time of the American continent to counter the shimmering surface of present politics.



Fire fallen tree, Punch Bowl, 2024 / 40 by 60 inches / oil on canvas

## What do you mean by deep time? What kind of imagery do you use?

This work engages an animist spirit and the stories buried in the ground. The landscapes depict underworld entrances: caves; storm or fire downed trees. The Paisley Caves in the paintings are located in Lake County, Oregon. Archaeological finds in the cave definitively established human habitation over 14,000 years ago. The caves were once lapped by waves. Now they stand high above a sage filled plain. That sense of time and change connects us to the larger, living world. That's true deep time.



Paisley Caves 1, 2024 / 48 x 60.5 inches / oil on panel

**You work in multiple mediums. Would you talk about the drawings?**

I like drawing large. I can use my whole arm in the mark making. There is a different kind of glide and resistance whether I'm using oil pastel or a big graphite stick. Also each of those mediums in the drawings have a "voice". Let them each sing a different part and you have a full band.





Paisley Cave platter, 2024 / 16 x 16 x 5 inches / ceramic

## Why Coyote?

I've been having many sightings and run-ins with coyotes recently. While at Playa, a residency in Southeastern Oregon I read Dan Flores' book "Coyote America". Coyote the deity created death, the stars and bumbled through many episodes of fertile chaos. Coyote the animal has a complicated relationship to the United States's history of Puritanical programs of extermination and persistent resilience.



[Skip to Main Content](#)



Search by artist, gallery, style, theme, tag, etc.



Coyote's Travels: Strength, 2024 / 40 x 51.5 inches / oil pastel, conte crayon and graphite on paper

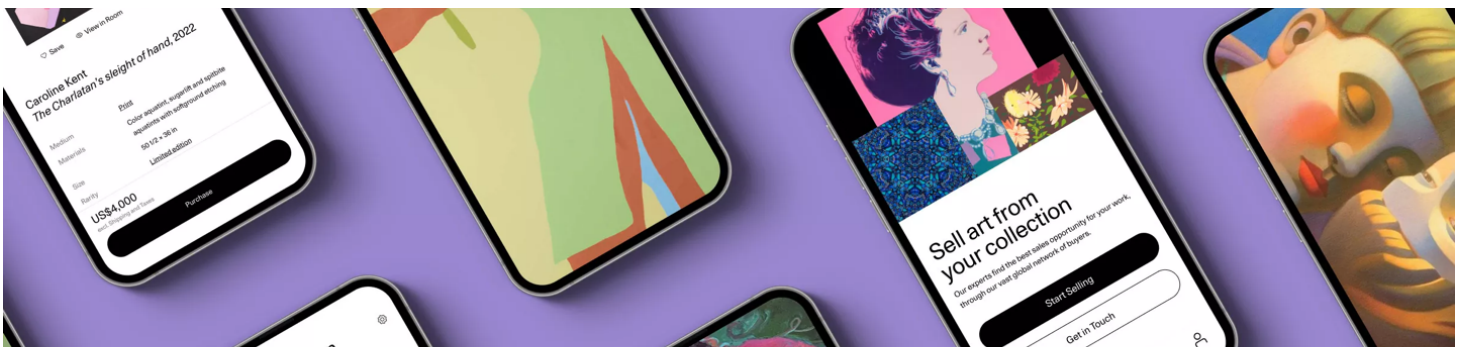
## Do the works all need to be seen together? How do they fit together?

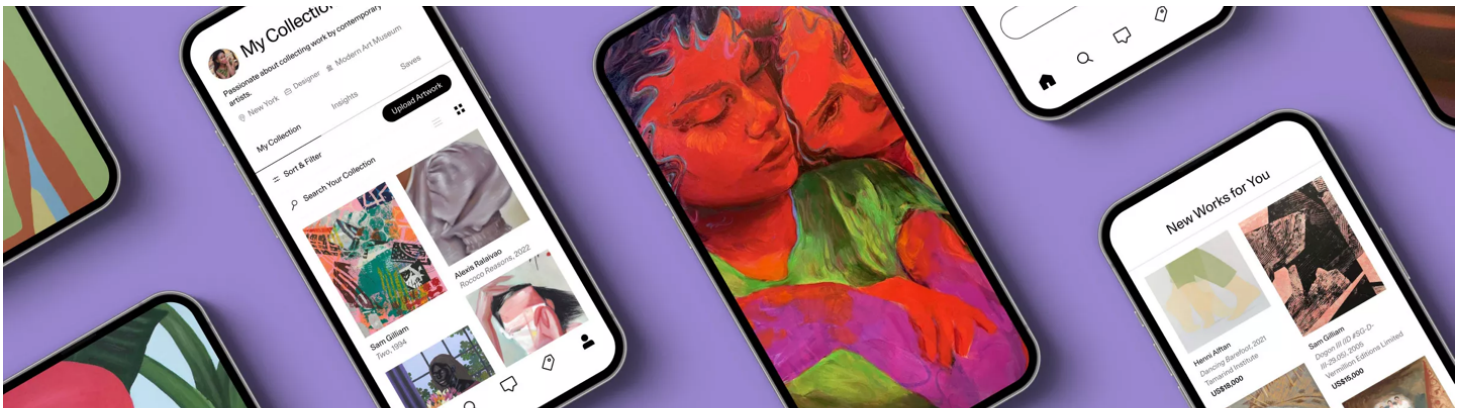
Each series can be self-contained but they all contain connective tissue between each other. There is a call and response between the Tarot symbology of the drawings and the straight on landscapes that speak to the shamanic imagery of the ceramic sculptures. (The sculptures are featured in the Archer exhibition but are not on Artsy) That will give it a bigger context and change some of the meanings, but each work is also meant to have its own life.



Daniel Duford in his studio August 2024

[View works \(7\)](#)





# Meet your new art advisor.

Discover Artsy

---

**About us**

About

Jobs

Press

Contact

**Resources**

Open Source

Blog

The Art Genome Project

## Partnerships

[Artsy for Galleries](#)

[Artsy for Museums](#)

[Artsy for Auctions](#)

[Artsy for Fairs](#)

## Support

[Visit our Help Center](#)

[Buying on Artsy](#)

## Get the App

[iOS App](#)

[Android App](#)

[© 2024 Artsy](#) [Terms and Conditions](#) [Auction Supplement](#) [Buyer Guarantee](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Security](#)  
[Do not sell my personal information](#) [Theme](#)



[© 2024 Artsy](#) [Terms and Conditions](#) [Auction Supplement](#)  
[Buyer Guarantee](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Security](#)  
[Do not sell my personal information](#) [Theme](#)

