

P R O S P E C T U S

# WHAT COLOR BLOOD



*An original encaustic painting by*

DEAN CHARLTON





The jarring red blast that abruptly interrupts this composition—and reappears in several other paintings by Charlton—was first introduced here, in *What Color Blood*.

A glaringly overt symbol of violence in its many forms, the cartoonish explosion evokes immediate connections to the work of Pop Art luminary, Roy Lichtenstein.

The burst of red befoils the mood of domestic harmony suggested by the quilt's cheery depictions of fruit baskets, flowers, birds and butterflies. In doing so, life and death clash with hearth and home.



A comparison with Roy Lichtenstein's "Varoom!" from 1963

The quilt that served as reference for *What Color Blood* features twelve charming, detailed vignettes. Rather than being sewn into the fabric, the scenes were painted on, using a stenciling technique borrowed from theorem art, a style popular during the 1830s. Unfortunately, the chemicals those quilters routinely applied in order to affix their pigments are now known to be



A similar explosion of red is found in the second painting in this series, "The View From Above"



Theorem painters used stencils and harsh chemicals to fuse their pigments into fabrics



extremely toxic. Thus, these unique stenciled quilts—often created to commemorate births, marriages or other life-affirming events—ironically posed life-threatening health risks to those making them.

Adopting another technique commonly used in early American folk art, text is painted along the left and right edges of *What Color Blood*. Based on a childhood tongue twister, the message is dark, both figuratively and literally. Shown at right in a more readable form, its sing-song cadence belies the ominous sentiment. Two additional snippets of nearly unnoticeable text provide more context by identifying the original quilt as a work from the deep South that was created around 1830—when slavery was in full force. In this antebellum frame of reference, the quilt’s flowers, fruit baskets, birds and butterflies take on a grim and sardonic tone. The domestic imagery brings to mind the privileged family life of plantation owners, whose ample leisure time allowed for the creation of such elaborate works, but was made possible in large part by the cold-blooded economics of slavery.



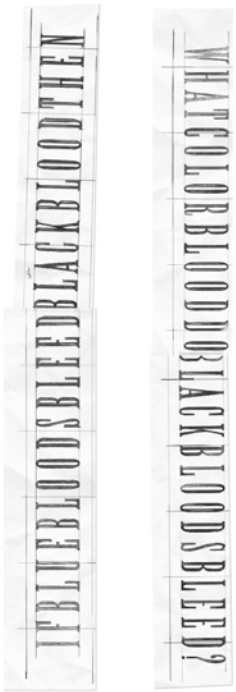
An anonymous work of American folk art showing the use of text along the borders



The quilt’s approximate date of origin is inscribed: CIRCA 1830



The home town of its creators appears also: NATCHEZ MISS



The sheets used to transfer the text to both sides

ADDITIONAL  
DETAILS

*What Color Blood* is a 72- by 48-inch original artwork that was painted using the encaustic method — wherein melted beeswax is infused with various pigments and applied to a canvas using brushes. Layer upon layer of the colored wax was built up to create a heavy impasto. After its initial application, the wax was reworked in places using utility knives, heat guns, a propane torch and soldering irons.

An ancient technique, many encaustic paintings have survived since Roman times. Yet some precautions are required: Exposure to extreme heat must be avoided, as beeswax melts at around 140 degrees. More information about encaustic art can be found on the following pages of this prospectus.

The surface used for *What Color Blood* is a custom-built cotton canvas with reinforced framing. White acrylic gesso was applied before painting began.

The initial work on *What Color Blood* was completed in 2002, with additional modifications made in 2010 and 2012. The painting is signed on the back.



A close-up showing the thick impasto



The wax surface was further reworked with utility knives and heated tools

Encaustic is an ancient painting technique dating back to at least the 1st Century BC. Many art historians even consider several of the Lascaux cave paintings to be early forms of encaustic art.

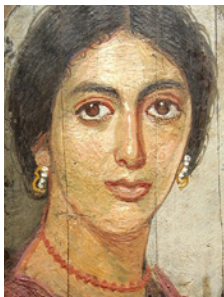
Its defining ingredient is heat.

Rather than suspending pigments in oils or polymers, the encaustic method employs melted beeswax — which is infused with various colors — and applied to a wood panel or canvas.

During the entire painting session the wax must be kept in a hot, liquid state. Today’s practitioners typically use electric griddles or a heated palette made specifically for encaustic painting.

In the 1950s, Jasper Johns revitalized and modernized encaustic painting by adroitly using its inherent dimensional characteristics to create sly, politically-charged Pop Art masterpieces that literally drip with visual satire. *Flag*, his 1955 depiction of the 48-state star spangled banner, may be his most famous example.

Contemporary artists continue to explore and expand the medium’s potential by incorporating an array of surfaces, tools and techniques.



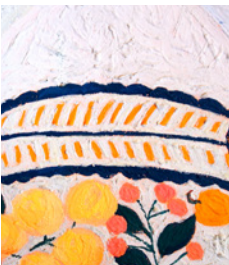
An Egyptian encaustic painting from around 100-300 AD



Jasper Johns, “Flag,” 1955



A detail from “Flag”



Detail from “What Color Blood”

## ABOUT ENCAUSTIC

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Dean Charlton was born in Santa Monica, California in 1957 and currently lives in Piedmont, California. He earned a BFA in Drawing & Painting from CSU Long Beach in 1980.

Dean’s work is a mash-up of his formal education and life-long absorption in the fine arts, combined with decades of on-the-job experience as an illustrator, graphic designer and ad man.

As a result, he frequently mixes traditional drawing and painting methods with digital apps and techniques. He’ll often use digital tools like Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop to streamline the initial planning phases of a project, before switching to traditional media for its final realization.

The Pop Art movement, especially the work of Larry Rivers, Jim Dine, Claes Oldenburg, David Hockney and Wayne Thiebaud are major influences, as is the work of “proto-pop” masters Marcel Duchamp and Charles Demuth.

In particular, Jasper Johns’ encaustic paintings inspired his ongoing explorations with that medium.



“U4ROTHKO”



“Jontue”



“A Still Life with Apple”



“Quilt 2: Matisse”

*What Color Blood* is available for purchase at an asking price of \$20,000.

Interested collectors living within proximity of the San Francisco Bay Area are invited to schedule a private viewing. The artist's home-studio is in Piedmont, an East Bay neighborhood situated between North Oakland and Berkeley.

Collectors not within easy traveling distance of the San Francisco area are encouraged to consider reserving *What Color Blood*. When your schedule brings you to the Bay Area, a private viewing will gladly be arranged. To place this painting on reserve, a payment amounting to 20% of the ask price is requested. The deposit is fully refundable. The hold period is flexible and open to negotiation. Should you decide to proceed with the purchase, this initial payment will of course be credited to the transaction.

If a competing offer is made on *What Color Blood* after it has been reserved, the collector who placed it on hold will be contacted and given the right of first refusal.

Because encaustic paintings are more delicate than works done in oils or acrylics, the logistics involved in transporting this work beyond the greater Northern California area are rather complex. A custom-fitted shipping container manufactured by specialists is normally required. As a consequence, the cost of long-distance transport—solely for the purpose of a viewing—is prohibitive.

## PRICE

## VIEWINGS



*The artist's studio is located in Piedmont, California*

## LOGISTICS



*The painting will be delivered free of charge to locations within approximately 200 miles of the San Francisco Bay Area*

For collectors within an approximately 200-mile radius of the San Francisco Bay Area, delivery of *What Color Blood* is free of charge. The painting will be carefully prepared for highway travel, but will not require a custom-built shipping container. The delivery drivers are experienced art transport professionals.

California patrons in the Los Angeles area and beyond will incur some transport expenses, although in an elaborate, custom-fitted shipping crate may not be necessary.

A custom-made shipping crate will be required for collectors who want *What Color Blood* delivered to locations beyond 300 miles from San Francisco. Expect the combined cost of both the container and the shipping expenses to be approximately \$1,000 for most destinations within the continental US. Exact shipping costs will be calculated prior to final purchase.

Incremental cost increases should be anticipated for international transport, depending on distance.

## CONTACT

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## ARTIST STATEMENT

*Jasper Johns rejuvenated encaustic painting by applying its thick, craggy impasto textures to simple shapes—like stars and stripes—that were the building blocks of politically charged images—like the American flag.*

*While fully embracing the ideas and influence of Mr. Johns, I wanted to take the encaustic vocabulary in different directions with What Color Blood. To create emotional tension between the folksy quilt motif and the red burst, I used delicate, intricate line work and soft, harmonious colors for the quilt's 12 vignettes and its border. A faithful reproduction of an 1830s theorem quilt, I was drawn to this particular design not only for its homey, domestic aura, but also for its impressive detail and craftsmanship.*

*In contrast, the diamond shapes between the vignettes are painted with the expressionistic, dripping brush strokes typical of Jasper Johns. And of course, the red splatter has intentional ties to another Pop Art master, Roy Lichtenstein.*

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