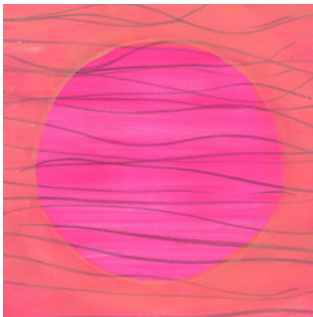


# SILENT KNOCKING



Joell Jones

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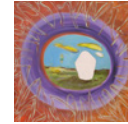
Joell Jones

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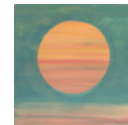
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## Introduction

A presence was silently knocking.  
at the edge of consciousness.

I was barely aware of this knocking.  
even though it began to appear as a symbol in my  
work.

The Self used a symbol to send a message  
from inside of me.

It used the work as a go between.  
The subconscious was trying to get the attention  
of the conscious mind.

As I approached, it withdrew.  
Yet I became determined to heed the knocking,  
to pursue it, and to bring it into awareness.



One summer afternoon in 2017 I was looking over recent work, and my attention was grabbed by a large acrylic painting from the Core Series: Core, 47.

I had painted it earlier that year, but all of a sudden it struck me as strange and unfamiliar. For one thing, in contrast to much of my work, it appeared more refined. And there was a huge shape that could only be seen as an opening into another dimension.

I work spontaneously, from an involuntary place. Often I don't understand what I'm doing at the time I am painting. Now I wondered how I had come to make this piece.

So began a quest to find the origin of the portal image. I felt compelled to investigate and to understand it, and perhaps to gain insight from it.

Eventually I found similar openings, or portals, in work dating back a few years.



## STANDING STONES

In early 2016 I painted the Standing Stone Series, a number of gouaches painted in a spontaneous style on handmade paper. At the time a broken relationship led to a period of suffering. In need of grounding, a memory surfaced of the standing stones I had seen in Scotland. I remembered feeling grounded and stable in their presence, so I began to paint them.



The Stones were painted first. Then a horizon line was added. There was a choice having to do with composition and it led to something unexpected. Some of the stones were left above the line which created a levitating effect.

The choice of where to put the horizon line alchemically turned a stone into something lighter than air. The stones not only appeared weightless, but also transparent.

I found these openings in two pieces in the series.





## GATHER/PROTECT

The unexpected guest appeared only once in the next series, Gather/Protect. In this series the Standing Stones are walled off from chaos by a barrier. This mirrored the way I was walling off myself, and feeling the need for boundaries, during a vulnerable time.

I was working in acrylic using a layering technique. I felt a subtle pull to reserve a certain small part of the canvas. It resisted being painted over.

That is how the portal image jumped in under my radar. Again, it appeared in the sky. It looked like an opening into a striated other-world.



## STONE

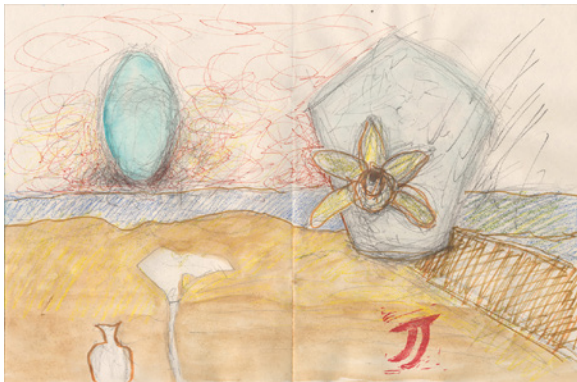
I discovered the portal four times in the Stone Series. In this series a single, prominent stone, a symbol of the self, rests within the landscape, and the protective shield is gone. This reflected an easing of tension in my life situation.

Two portals appeared in large acrylic paintings. The layering technique I was using provided an opportunity for the shape to enter, almost defiantly. Transparent windows appeared in the sky.





Two more portals were found in smaller works on paper from the Stone Series. Turquoise ovals, larger in proportion to other objects in the painting, compared with earlier paintings, hold their own in a triad with stones and flowers. Their solidity or transparency is ambiguous.



## AUTHENTIC LINE & PENTAGON

In the previous series the portal was paired with a stone. The stone had gradually taken the form of a pentagon. In this series, the portal melds with the stone. Stone and portal unite to form a pentagon aloft, an opening into a heretofore hidden realm of possibility.



The Authentic Line & Pentagon Series marked a return to baseline. I had more emotional stability. The fear and anxiety had receded and I felt more settled. This gave me the freedom to explore and to freely express strong surges of core energy.

I stayed with this image, creating many paintings in gouache and acrylic. The paintings began with strong, often vicious, marks, reflecting my internal state of being at that moment.



## PEBBLE

When I'd gone as far as I could with Authentic Line & Pentagon, I was restless and ready for something new to enter. It was then I heard the Silent Knocking. I remembered the interloper and those glimpses through the portal. I recalled the mysterious image that had been appearing sporadically and I invited it into my conscious state.

The Pebble Series posed a dilemma. How could I consciously conjure up the image when, before, it had been the product of the unconscious? How could I capture the spirit of the image and not just copy its shape?



The color palette and strong line work of Authentic Line & Pentagon continued, but were used in a new way. I focused on the shadow presence. Summoning it gave new purpose and a narrowed focus to the initial marks. They are now directed into forceful upward lines to summon the mystery shape - small, pebble shaped ovals at the culmination of the upward lines.

The Pebble Series had a long run. Like a visual Koan, the paintings had a conscious mission that could only be achieved if I suspended the familiar. Letting go of entrenched work patterns. It forced a shift in internal paradigm that begat a shift in my creative process.

The paintings began with horizons of overlapping colors, applied with care and abandon, laying the groundwork, setting the stage for the drama to unfold.

This was a pivotal moment. I was using a more conscious approach. In my old pattern line always came first. Now the color layer was applied first, forcing the line to wait. This reversal was essential to achieve my goal. I had to create an environment that invited the image to enter.



I would lay ground work for the new dimension. Then use lines to summon the portal. An overlay of color frames the space, so both planes are present at once.

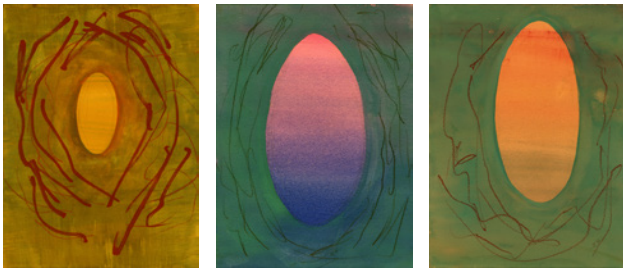




## CORE

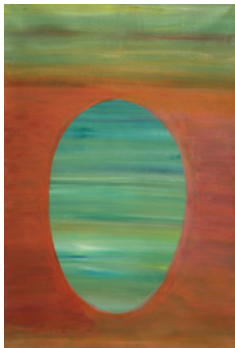
I am back where I started, with the 2017 Core Series.

The summoning complete, the pebble shape captured, now the portal becomes larger, more prominent. Initially, the lines are still there but are no longer used to summon. They envelope, surround and support the shape.



The image represented freedom and a way out.

It was right there, in front of me all along.

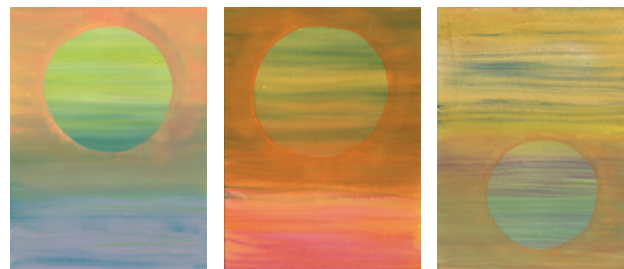


As the Core Series evolved, I dropped the lines altogether to focus exclusively on the symbol. First came layers of horizontal colors. Then the opening, the part defying annihilation, was found. I created it with an overlay of paint, masking all but the portal.

As the opening became the defining image of the painting, there was a corresponding willingness in myself to go deeper and to look into core issues.



Personal inquiry led to new levels of self awareness, and the series evolved. The shape shifted from oval to round. Gazing through the threshold, a horizon is seen, carrying the promise of something more, perhaps insight, perhaps an adventure. I am more and more comfortable with openness and spaciousness and with the unknown.



These portals represent the willingness to look into the subconscious at a deeper level. They symbolically hold the space for exploration, inviting the unexpected.

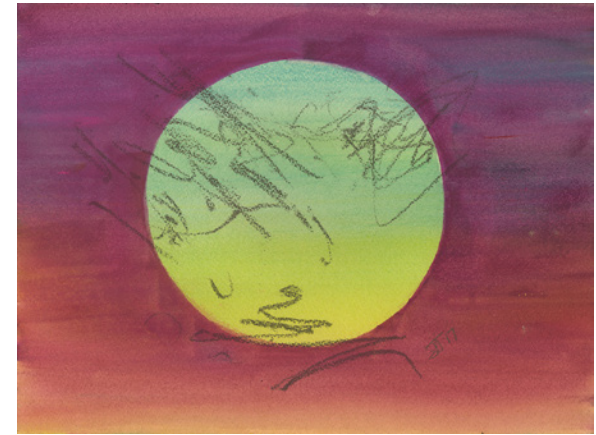
## BOUNDARY

The unexpected did arrive in the Boundary Series. The Core imagery continues and a third layer is added, an extra level of exploration. A variety of expressive marks now obscure the openings, to different degrees. Now there is something between the viewer and inner dimension.



The concept of Boundaries is introduced.

Line has returned, but with a different intention — to explore the ways we protect ourselves and interact with the world.



A new adventure into the self.





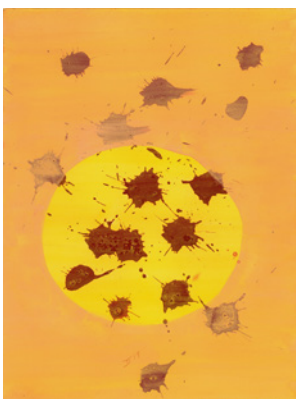
I continue to explore the range of boundaries.

Here, the marks organize themselves into horizontal lines, deliberately and systematically drawn. The portal becomes almost totally camouflaged. In an effort to protect the self.





Now I explore the other end of the boundary spectrum. I go on the offensive. Large acrylic markers allow me to attack the canvas, as if to break through an invisible barrier, acting out against an unknown boundary.



I give myself permission to attack the surface and the marks become increasingly violent. The force, causes the paint to splatter. By the last painting, I exhaust the primal, focused energy. I push past my resistance.



Then the series ended.

## Epilogue

I have connected to various forms of personal boundaries, acted them out through painting, as they had been acted out in my life. The unconscious has become conscious. Message received. With this awareness another insight comes. Without the extremes of defensiveness or aggression, new responses are possible.

Old patterns have shifted.

A new image arrives.

The tea bowl . . .



## Silent Knocking list of work

Works are acrylic or gouache on canvas, ragboard, or handmade paper. Other media include oil pastels, acrylic and china markers, graphite, colored pencil and ink. All dimensions are in inches. Some images have been cropped.

*Work listed in order on page: top to bottom, left to right.*

### STANDING STONES 2016

Standing Stones 7	Gouache	12 x 9	page 4
Standing Stones 5	Gouache	10 x 8	page 5

### GATHER/PROTECT 2016

Gather/Protect 11	Acrylic	39 x 51	page 6
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### STONE 2016

Stone, 1	Acrylic	48 x 60	page 7
Stone 19	Acrylic	60 x 71	page 7
Stone 23	Gouache	10 x 14	page 8
Stone 27	Mixed Media	11 x 17	page 8

### AUTHENTIC LINE & PENTAGON 2016

A. Line & Pentagon 73	Gouache	10 x 14	page 9
A. Line & Pentagon c7	Gouache	5 x 7	page 10
A. Line & Pentagon 90	Gouache	12 x 16	page 10
A. Line & Pentagon 86	Gouache	9 x 12	page 10
A. Line & Pentagon 92	Gouache	10 x 14	page 10
A. Line & Pentagon 74	Gouache	10 x 14	page 10
A. Line & Pentagon c8	Gouache	5 x 7	page 10

### PEBBLE 2016

Pebble 10	Gouache	9 x 7	page 11
Pebble 15	Gouache	14 x 10	page 12
Pebble 22	Gouache	10 x 7	page 12
Pebble 78	Gouache	14 x 10	page 13
Pebble 73	Gouache	12 x 9	page 13
Pebble 48	Acrylic	36 x 18	page 13
Pebble 49	Acrylic	36 x 18	page 13
Pebble 50	Acrylic	36 x 18	page 13

### CORE 2016–2017

Core 5	Gouache/Acrylic	10 x 7	page 14
Core 3	Gouache	14 x 10	page 14
Core 4	Gouache	12 x 9	page 14
Core 47	Acrylic	50 x 35	page 14
Core 29	Gouache	14 x 10	page 15
Core 32	Gouache	12 x 9	page 15
Core 30	Gouache	12 x 9	page 15
Core 6	Acrylic	26 x 11	page 15
Core 27	Gouache	14 x 10	page 15
Core 68	Gouache	12 x 9	page 16
Core 66	Gouache	12 x 9	page 17
Core 62	Gouache	10 x 7	page 17
Core 60	Gouache	12 x 9	page 17
Core 75	Acrylic	40 x 26	page 17
Core 74	Acrylic	40 x 26	page 17

### BOUNDARY 2017

Boundary 3	Gouache	10 x 7	page 18
Boundary 2	Gouache	10 x 7	page 18
Boundary 4	Gouache	10 x 7	page 18
Boundary 5	Gouache	9 x 12	page 19
Boundary 15	Gouache	14 x 10	page 19
Boundary 19	Gouache	12 x 9	page 19
Boundary 18	Gouache	12 x 9	page 20
Boundary 22	Gouache	14 x 10	page 20
Boundary 34	Gouache	10 x 7	page 20
Boundary 35	Gouache	10 x 7	page 20
Boundary 36	Gouache	10 x 7	page 20
Boundary 23	Gouache	14 x 10	page 21
Boundary 57	Gouache	10 x 7	page 22
Boundary 58	Gouache	10 x 7	page 22
Boundary 61	Gouache	8 x 8	page 22
Boundary 65	Gouache	12 x 9	page 22
Boundary 60	Gouache	10 x 7	page 23
Boundary 76	Gouache	10 x 7	page 23
Boundary 72	Gouache	8 x 8	page 23

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**Joell Jones**  
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