



Eric Sall (American, b. 1977)

Magnetic Mess, 2004

Oil on canvas

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2005.10

Gift of Marti and Tony Oppenheimer

In *Magnetic Mess*, Eric Sall combines hard-edged forms in flat colors with passages of thick impasto and diluted paint to create a multi-dimensional abstract composition. Both the visual elements and title suggest a powerful duality of order and chaos. In creating his paintings Sall thoughtfully considers each element, and their textures give evidence of his various processes. Here, he carefully laid down the hard lines of the central black, blue, and gray planes with the precision of a sign painter. The black U shape, suggestive of a horseshoe magnet, grounds the composition between the mottled lavender, orange and teal stains in the background and the rainbow-colored “mess” spontaneously applied with a palette knife in the lower right. Meanwhile, heavy black bands frame the bottom and right sides of the painting, emphasizing its two dimensional surface, while the space is further articulated by the broad strokes of mixed blue, green and white that zigzag over the center of the composition. Taking inspiration from architecture, computer graphics, logos, and the mass media, Sall transforms recognizable forms into abstract visions, giving hints of something familiar but leaving the paintings open to interpretation. “Ultimately,” he says, “I’m looking for an image that is challenging not only for myself, but more importantly, the viewer.”

Eric Sall received a BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute in 1999 and an MFA from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2006. He won a Charlotte Street Foundation award in 2001, and he participated in the final exhibition titled *Homecoming* at the JCCC Gallery of Art in 2006 to 2007. Both of his paintings *Framebreaker* (2004) and *Countdown to Tomorrow* (2002) are currently on view in the COM Dining Area.



Elsie Holiday (American Indian, Navajo, b. 1964)

Changing Woman, Navajo basket, ca. 2008

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Collection Nerman Museum of American Art, 2009.50

Navajo basket weaving had nearly disappeared as a tradition before the 1970s, when a number of weavers at Douglas Mesa, a part of the Navajo Reservation that is in Utah, began to focus on innovative approaches to making baskets. One of those weavers, Mary Holiday, began to incorporate sacred imagery into her basket designs, like weavers had done with sand painting textiles years earlier. She created a new tradition of Navajo "Story Baskets." Elsie Holiday, born in Monument Valley, married into this innovative family and was inspired by them to weave baskets.

Holiday's "Changing Woman" basket is one of several that were inspired by the paintings of Helen Hardin (1943-1984). Traditional interpretations of Changing Woman say that she is the major deity for the Navajo people, with a long and complex story. She was found by First Man as a baby, and she grew from an infant to an adult in only four days. She changes appearances according to the seasons: a youth in spring and summer and an old woman in winter, then a youth again. Holiday suggests that she also incorporates both man and woman in one form. She is the mother of Monster Slayer, who cleared the world of monsters. She brought rain, plants, and animals to earth and she rubbed off pieces of her skin to create the original Navajo people in their four original clans.