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## **PAUL BERNHARDT**

### **ARTIST STATEMENT**

Over the past four years my painting practice has been concerned with the exploration of alternative painting materials, and their application to landscape based imagery. I work with materials that carry industrial associations – tars, acids, and patina applied to a steel surface.

Working with these materials demands extensive technical exploration: the drying times of tars, the intentional rusting or preservation of steel, the effective use of patinas or acids, and various methods of abrasion, all require consideration. This process alludes to heavy industry, entropy, and potential deterioration through the strong material presence in the simplified landscape image. Inspired by frequent hikes through the landscape, the works are created from memory. Ultimately the paintings explore the tensions between various oppositions: image and surface, abstraction and figuration, beauty and toxicity. These tensions may serve to both engage and alienate the viewer, an allegory for our own contradictory relationship to the land.

