

# iantangallery

## Art Process of David Pirrie

There are different ways to explain one's process in the production of art. These include training, inspiration, conceptualization, formal concerns, and of course the actual physical act of art making.

To begin, I really enjoyed art school, I was in my element. I obtained a BFA from Concordia University in Montreal in 1991 where I had the good fortune to be in an intensive studio driven environment. Great teachers can really make the difference and I was lucky to have had several. My strongest memory and a continuing influence was a quote from Guido Molinari who remarked one day as he wandered by me working was "no work, no matter how conceptually sound, can work as an image if it is not grounded formally". Fortunately, it was a compliment.

Earlier as a teenager I became an avid mountaineer and ski mountaineer, exploring the rugged wilderness that started in my backyard in North Vancouver.

This also led to a fascination with cartography, pouring over maps for hours, plotting out routes for future trips.

To get at the basics of what I am doing now I start with the subject. It may be a mountain I have climbed or skied, or perhaps in the vicinity. All my work is based on photographs, which I project onto a hand-stretched canvas. The image is considered compositionally before executing the initial drawing. All of the prominent features, darks and lights, snow etc are then drawn out in detail.

I employ a pretty classic approach to painting, starting with a sienna like colour ground. I then start blocking in my colours with layers of glazes, using paint thinner to move and remove paint, sometimes heavier to let the paint run. This is followed by a slow building up of tinted glazes, with an effort to let as much of the light pass through.

Once I am close to finishing the landscape part of the painting, I then proceed to counter the monochromatic palette of the mountain with intense pantone based colours as a background, which also usually leads into a dot matrix or map grid overlay on top of the mountain.

This aspect of my work is where it leaves a more classic approach to landscape painting and places it pretty clearly in a Pop lexicon. I'm treating the mountains like celebrities, fashioning larger than life, unattainable, beautiful and mysterious portrayals. In this light the work becomes an exercise in re-framing how we perceive the mountains; examining the function of representation and how preserving something in imagery can make it iconic.