

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Exhibition Dates: July 1 – August 28, 2010

Opening/Artist Reception: First Thursday July 1, 5-8pm

Location: ArtXchange Gallery, 512 First Ave S, Seattle, WA 98104

Hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 11 AM – 5:30 PM, First Thursday until 8 PM

Phone: 206-839-0377

Website: www.artxchange.org

Mountain Visions

Northwest artist Donald Cole explores the landscapes of Vietnam

(Seattle, WA – June 5, 2010) Inspired by craggy precipices, rolling mists, and the lush foliage of northwest Vietnam, Donald Cole presents a series of *Mountain Visions*, distilled and come to life through multiple approaches to process and materials. In the winter of 2009, Cole journeyed to the mountains of Vietnam north of Hanoi, just below China. On the wandering trails of Sapa the artist made drawings in his sketchbook inspired both by the vistas before him and a longstanding love for mountain landscapes depicted in traditional Chinese, Japanese and Vietnamese art.

Join ArtXchange Gallery as we celebrate Mr. Cole, his *Mountain Visions* exhibition, and the remarkable accomplishment of a 40+ year career as a painter - a lifetime dedicated to art and visual exploration. Mr. Cole will be available during the reception on First Thursday July 1, 5-8 pm and First Thursday August 5, 5-8pm.

Cole's signature bright colors and weathered surfaces are interspersed throughout the series, but each painting is purposefully a technical departure from the next, alluding to the artist's desire to continually push his own boundaries. In richly textured large-scale canvases, mixed-media collages, and delicate ink paintings on the surface of matchboxes, Cole playfully explores the possibilities of materials to express the experience of beholding the awe inspiring natural world. Cole reflects, "*the appearance and the content of my work comes from several sources: the joy of painting and creating, and my own social, psychological and ethical responses to the world as I live and view it.*"

Donald Cole was born in New York City. His painting career emerged in the 1960s as he combined the experience of studying painting in the artistic hotbed of New York, a love for the emotive possibilities of abstract expressionist painting, and a resonance with the colors and textures of the non-Western world. He has been awarded multiple awards and grants, including two grants from the NEA. While exhibiting regularly on the East Coast, Cole also taught painting in Japan and Israel before settling in his current home on Vashon Island. Now, in his 79th year, Cole still travels regularly to gain inspiration for his artwork. He has exhibited in New York at 55 Mercer Gallery, French & Co., the Nancy Hoffman Gallery and the Frank Marino Gallery. Since settling in the Pacific Northwest he has shown at galleries including Foster/White Gallery, the Jeffrey Moose Gallery, ArtXchange Gallery and Gallery 070 on Vashon. He has participated in Tacoma Art Museum biennials and his work is in a number of private and public collections including the Portland Art Museum, the Worcester Art Museum, and the ARCO Center for the Visual Arts, Los Angeles.

About ArtXchange Gallery:

ArtXchange Gallery is a contemporary intercultural art gallery that inspires cultural exploration, the expansion of global community and the exchange of ideas through art. We exhibit artists whose work reflects the diversity of influences shaping the Seattle community and contemporary global culture.

Artwork Images Attached:

(images by Charles Backus Photography, courtesy of ArtXchange Gallery)

1. Donald Cole, **Mountain Vision 1**
Acrylic on Canvas, 77" x 100"
Begun late-80s, completed 2010
2. Donald Cole, **Mountain Vision 3**
Acrylic on Canvas, 30" x 24"
2010
3. Donald Cole, **Mountain Vision 6**
Acrylic on Canvas, 30" x 24"
2010
4. Donald Cole, **Mountain Vision 9**
Acrylic on Canvas, 40" x 30"
2010
5. Donald Cole, **Mountain Vision 19**
Acrylic and Fabric on Canvas, 7" x 7"
2010
6. Donald Cole, **Lacquer Vision 1**
Lacquered Paper and Handmade Paper, 7" x 7"
2010
7. Donald Cole, **Matchboxes**
Ink and Paper on Matchbox, 1.5" x 2" each
2010
8. Mountain Visions exhibition postcard (*front*)

Mountain Visions exhibition catalog essay by Elaine Hanowell

It was my great pleasure to be one of Donald Cole's traveling companions in Vietnam where the inspiration for this body of work began. A lot of the magic of the landscape was literally unfolding as fog lifted and shifted around the mountain peaks. I watched Don respond to these scenes, sketchbook in hand. One could see his keen level of attention both at these times and later in the studio. He has what I would call a confidence of engagement. This shows up as an approach that is light and open and at the same time very focused. The resulting work is a rich feast of painting and collage. Given that one of his parameters was to let each piece be its own mountain vision, we are presented with a delightful range of approach, both in scale and style.

Mountain Vision 1 is a large triptych at 77"x100". This bold freely worked painting is almost shocking in the red of the rising mountains and the green of the river that moves downward. There are loosely painted forms in blue and yellow in the lower area giving this piece a strange moving vitality. In a further bid for tension, Don has scrawled mudlike calligraphy strokes across the canvas. This is quite a complex and compelling piece in its unexpected beauty. In strong contrast to the flamboyance of 1, *Mountain Vision 6* has a limited palette of blues and whites. Here is a feeling of innocence. The simplicity is disarming and utterly true. Cole's statement of "*being vulnerable to my heart in the choice of what I paint*" is evident here with his ability to strip away the unnecessary.

The intriguing collages are largely made of paper that was used in some application of lacquer in Japan. The crumpled paper retains an uneven residue of rich color which the artist has ingeniously torn into rough mountain shapes. The results are playful and serene with Cole's often surprising juxtapositions.

It will take time to absorb the variety in this exhibition. Each piece has something to say and subsequent viewings reveal new impressions. Donald Cole's considerable skills are enhanced by his willingness to take risks and to utilize new approaches. What is clear throughout is his great love of painting and his desire to communicate to the viewer new visual experiences.



Left: Mountain Vision 1, 77" x 100," Acrylic on Canvas
Right: Mountain Vision 6, 30" x 24," Acrylic on Canvas

Elaine Hanowell is a Pacific Northwest artist whose unique sculptural art is seen in private and public installations around the country. Hanowell works primarily in paper and carved wood. She is best known in Seattle for her public installations of lighted fish forms at Dahlia Lounge and Asian Counseling and Referral Service. Hanowell and Cole have exhibited together at Foster/White and ArtXchange Gallery.