

A Conversation with Quin de la Mer
By Sherri Cornett

As a twelve-year-old, Quin de la Mer had a near-death experience during which they felt a complete union between their whole self and the generative Cosmos and Void. Since then, they have found it easy to expand the boundaries of physicality and to commune with the unseen, the micro and macrocosms, and the beings that inhabit those spaces while remaining connected to this world. These experiences and collaborations inspire them and are the basis for all the work they create.

Sherri Cornett: This is fascinating, Quin! Let's start with how to describe your work. Though you are idea-driven, you don't identify as a Concept Artist?

Quin de la Mer: Yes. I've been transitioning from focusing on "concepts" to "cosmologies." Cosmology involves the study of the Universe and the Multiverse. This term brings attention to all the elements involved in creating each body of artwork and emphasizes the inclusive nature of the process. All my work has a background and long process-driven components: 1) connecting with the unseen but deeply felt forces that exist beside us in time, 2) the idea(s) that stem from that connection, and 3) making the artwork.

SC: Would you be willing to discuss your process and the connections you make that lead to the physical art?

QM: *Requiem for the Salton Sea* [\[link\]](#) is a good example. I have been visiting this saline sea in the southern California desert since 2019 when the sea was in its hospice phase – the ecosystem that supported five endangered species and millions of migrating birds was collapsing. The environment was extreme – so salty, hot, and dry with toxic airborne dust that I would get a nosebleed within 10 minutes. Still, its most profound, unearthly, mystical and powerful beauty made me realize that Beauty is a warrior, a being, dispelling disparity and providing hope and courage.

I asked the place's more-than-human beings, "What is your experience of the Anthropocene (the age of human-caused planetary crisis)?" From their answers and their co-creation, I worked cyanotype paper into the dead zone algae, toxic waste and human trash along the shoreline. The elements did the rest. Together, these pieces make an extraordinary communication that defies translation. The process was a memorial with me as the funeral director.

SC: So, there is a weaving between the unseen and the final art piece.

QM: As the fiber artist Susan Barret Merrill wrote, "The art of weaving is a profound metaphor for understanding the workings of the universe and our place in it." When creating involves the written word, I write what is most important from the words I've collected and placed lovingly inside of truth as I know it at that moment. When creating involves the alchemy of oil painting

with foraged earth pigments, I express in an altered state sustained by heat and exhaustion, tears and emotions. Both are acts of weaving. Spinning spider silk, yarn, pigments, or words are actions that can bridge the gap between this reality and the beyond.

SC: I see that you have used “spike oil of lavender” in some of your work. . .

QM: I don’t like toxic materials; for me, they interfere with alchemical processes and limit the magic of painting. The Masters used lavender spike oil. It is antibacterial and antimicrobial, so bugs don’t like it. And I don’t get sick – a total bonus!

Many of my paintings are made with rock and minerals, waste stream debris and charcoal, which I find when bonding with a place. As they transform into pigment, I listen to their stories. As I paint, they paint. It is alchemy and a nod to possibilities. The two constellations – *Texture of Time* [link] and *Distillations of Human History* [link] – from my *The Last Exhale* cosmology are great examples of this process.

SC: Finally, welcome to the Arc Studios!

QM: I am so happy to be part of Arc. And I am excited to experiment with new painting methods, ground debris from recent travels, alternative photographic processes, and mark-making techniques.

My partner recently reminded me that, years ago, I came home from attending a FourSquared exhibit at ARC and raved about the fantastic studios and the great studio artists. I said, “I would like to have my studio there one day.” Happily, dreams do come true.

Quin de la Mer website: <https://quindelamer.com/>

Gallery representation: ArtRewards: <https://artrewards.net/artists/quin-de-la-mer/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/quindelamer>

For Priscilla:

Requiem for the Salton Sea: <https://quindelamer.com/requiem-for-the-salton-sea/>

Texture of Time <https://quindelamer.com/the-last-exhale-texture-of-time/>

Distillations of Human History <https://quindelamer.com/the-last-exhale-distillations-of-human-history/>