



Mike Henderson

"Paintings never give you what you like. They always give you what they want."

-- Mike Henderson



As a successful blues man, Mike Henderson has performed widely and released several albums. As a painter, Henderson's work has been exhibited across the country. And as if that weren't impressive enough, he's also an accomplished filmmaker. Spark visits Henderson in his San Leandro home studio as he jams on the guitar and creates a new series of paintings for the Haines Gallery.

As a young artist and musician in the mid-1960s, Henderson entrenched himself in the political rallies of the era. Inspired by these events, his artwork leaned toward the figurative, but after a fire destroyed many of his unsold paintings in 1985, he began to create increasingly more abstract pieces.

His oil work today is characterized by large brush strokes, spread and layered thick, then scraped away, leaving bold panes of color that many times reflect his visual interpretation of music. "I started painting these thoughts I had about music, using this big red, like Ray Charles screaming or an Albert King lick."

Born in the small farming town of Marshall, Missouri, in 1944, Mike Henderson was supposed to work in the local factory with his father. But his passion for art led him across the country to one of the first integrated art schools in the United States, the San Francisco Art Institute. He earned a B.F.A. in 1969 and an M.F.A. in 1970. Henderson has been teaching art and art history at the University of California at Davis ever since, and he is considered a prominent figure among the second generation of Bay Area abstract painters.

View **Spark** segment on Mike Henderson. **Original air date: July 2007.** (Running Time: 8:16):
<http://kqed02.streamguys.us/anon.kqed/spark/mikehender.m4v>