

An abstract painting featuring a complex interplay of blue and white brushstrokes. The composition is dominated by a large, vertical, textured stroke of white and light blue on the left side, which appears to be a thick application of paint. This stroke is surrounded by various shades of blue, from deep, dark blues to lighter, more ethereal tones. The overall effect is one of dynamic movement and layered depth, with the brushwork creating a sense of rhythm and texture. The background is a mix of these colors, with some areas appearing more saturated and others more washed out, creating a rich, multi-dimensional visual experience.

LINES OF COMMUNICATION

AN EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS BY **MARGARET GLEW**

TEXT BY ASHLEY JOHNSON

Margaret Glew is a Toronto based artist with a history of exhibitions dating back to 1989. Her work was shown at the Toronto International Art Fair each year from 2005-2008, and in 2007 she was one of eight Canadian artists exhibited in "Parca – Canada in New York", at the 511 Gallery in Chelsea. Her work is in a number of public and corporate collections. She is an active member of the Toronto arts community, and presently serves on the board of the J B Aird Gallery.

Ashley Johnson is a South African artist and writer currently based in Toronto. He co-founded Dasart, an artists' collective making socialist art that strives to rethink the connection between humanity and environment. In Toronto he is represented by Headbones Gallery. As a writer he was the art critic for Business Day, a national daily newspaper in South Africa. From 2005 he has been writing for magazines like Canadian Art. He holds a BAFA (art) degree from the University of Natal, South Africa.



DANCE WITH THE BONES; oil on canvas, 48" x 54", 2009

Lines of Communication

The paintings of Margaret Glew

We exist in a world we think we know yet are continually confounded by our own ignorance. Reality remains an unknowable enigma that taunts us as we pass through life to death. Margaret Glew's abstractions remind one of these great anomalies.

Her paintings bristle with an austere energy that manifests in horizontals and verticals, like a Calvinistic expression of faith. Colours are kept to an efficient minimum and she favours warm, dissonant combinations. Unlike complementary colours, which attract, dissonant pairings push away from one another, establishing visual tension.

There is a sense that these paintings are born of the earth and project a sense of time, or an unfolding. The forms seem to grow to inhabit the picture plane as if the whole rectangle or square is in a process of spawning smaller versions. The artist restrains her personal touch and idiosyncrasy to imbue them with this sense of becoming. Veils of colour part, revealing submerged rectangular areas from previous moments. It is as if one is looking through a transparent mist into the past. Often this haze is like molten lava, in red or orange tones, threatening to engulf the viewer.



FIREWALKING, oil on canvas, 48" x 36", 2009

She uses primarily one-inch brushes on 4 to 5 foot surfaces, which allow her to create airy expanses without a particularity of mark and also act as a crude means of delineation so the lines are not decorative. Certain symbols like crosses and circles pepper the paintings as if trying to locate points within the flux or contain comprehension, if just for a moment. In 'Firewalking' the X's seem animated, telling a story, like little people walking a tightrope and falling into oblivion. The symbols

become infused with life and attract viewer fantasy even as they remain totally abstract. Aesthetically the black lines and symbols serve to establish a rhythmic pattern of accents and bind the composition.

Certain paintings seem to thrive on intrigue, like 'Dance with the Bones', which has a labyrinthine maze of graphic indications that invite viewers to follow the clues, to engage with the unknown. A work like 'Somewhere Lions Still Move' travels through an interior space, with a rare use of diagonals, imparting a sense of perspective and depth. One is always aware of the movement from point to point or state to state.

There is a feminine, enveloping, quality to this work so there are no insistent individual projections but rather a series of visual incidents that activate the entire surface. In a caring society, the nurturing, symbiotic nature allows for death as part of the cycle of life. These paintings express the matter of fact-ness of existence, with all its harsh reality. The images conjure up desert vistas, or rock faces inscribed with lines that try to understand or explain the inchoate. However, they never become too insistent or remonstrative.

In the psychological paradigm, the paintings emerge from Glew's subconscious. She follows her impulses as honestly as possible, in an effort to give form to chaos. The process is reminiscent of Surrealist automatic writing. Much abstraction is

removed from this interpretation and locates itself in the so-called aesthetic purity of colour, line and the creation of an autonomous object. One senses something else in Glew's work, perhaps a closer connection with the nature of reality. Her paintings seem to express a journey through life to a spiritual understanding.

Ashley Johnson
Toronto, 2009



SOMEWHERE LIONS STILL MOVE: oil on canvas, 60" x 48", 2009



THINGS UNKNOWN; oil on canvas, 60" x 36". 2009



FLASHING INTO THE DARK; oil on canvas, 54" x 60", 2009



WILD NIGHTS; oil on canvas, 48" x 48", 2009



THE PROMPTINGS OF TIDES: oil on canvas, 60" x 36", 2009



STORM SURGE; oil on canvas, 60" x 60", 2009

Margaret Glew

Biography

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2009 Engine Gallery, Toronto, "Lines of Communication"
2008 Cell Gallery, Gallery 1313, Toronto, "Close Encounters"
Yorkminster Park Gallery, Toronto, "Silence and Slow Time"
2007 Engine Gallery, Toronto, "Shifting Borders"
2006 Loop Gallery, Toronto, "Traces"
2005 Engine Gallery, Toronto, "Winter Fire"
2004 Cell Gallery, Gallery 1313, Toronto, "Marking Time"
Loop Gallery, Toronto, " Ordinary Angels"
2002 Cedar Ridge Studio Gallery, Scarborough

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2009 J. B. Aird Gallery, Toronto "Septette"
2007 511 Gallery, Chelsea, New York, "PARCA, Canada in New York"
2006 Gallery 1313, Toronto, "Earthworks" (two person)
2004 Engine Gallery, Toronto, "Engine"
2003 Gallery 1313, Toronto, "The Wet Show"
Coop Gallery, Toronto
2002 John B. Aird Gallery, Toronto, "Capable of Transformation"

COLLECTIONS

- City of Scarborough
Sunnybrook Regional Health Centre
City of Toronto Archives
Toronto Historical Board
Dominion Ventures Limited
Transamerica Life
Richmond Hill Public Library