

cynthia byrnes contemporary art

Artist Bios

Betsy Davidson

With a background in traditional landscape painting and an affinity toward Abstract Expressionism, Betsy B. Davidson accesses a rich visual vocabulary. Using oil and acrylic paint, gouache, ink, collage materials, and other media, she develops distinct and unusual compositions by embracing chance and her intuitive “first thoughts.” Often viewed as abstract arrangements, the paintings and collages can also create their own landscape.

Davidson sees each of her compositions as an activated dialogue of formal connections – between line, shape, color and space. In a process that could involve layering, scraping and scratching, a seductive and nuanced surface is revealed. There is breathability, where elements can float, advance or recede. As Davidson explains, “I allow myself to see possibilities in the mark-making and to embrace the unpredictable, serendipitous moments...all in a practice where the subconscious and intuitive is folded into the formal, traditional concerns of picture-making.”

Catherine Chesters

b. 1969 , Co. Durham, UK

Catherine Chesters is a painter and designer making things of beauty and irony. Growing up in the North East of England in the 70’s and 80’s was a schizophrenic combination of overwhelming natural beauty and violent culture. Catherine combines her observations of nature with imagination in order to turn the mundane and discomfort of existence into escapist imagery.

Her work reflects her early rural surrounding elements while winding her 2 decades of New York living in generating a surreal visual that maintains a naive optimism. Infusing some techniques of screen printing, a strong sense of color and cultural communication, Catherine masters avoidance through the language of visual communication.

Claudia Mengel

b. 1954, New York, NY

Claudia Mengel’s work comes not from direct observation, but by experiencing the world around her as she translates visual and emotional perceptions. With every creation, there is a new discovery, a new problem, and new solution. Working across multiple media from printing, to painting, to mixed media, Mengel produces wildly expressive, vibrant abstract compositions and atmospheric landscapes. Each time she approaches the blank space of paper or canvas, she embarks on a unique journey that is always unlike the last, and never like the next.

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Cynthia Kirkwood

b. 1965, Zurich, Switzerland

When I trust my intuition, the path forward is clear in all aspects of daily life, including my work. My mediums include graphite, ink, oils, gouache, screen-printing, and collage. My subjects vary but all connect to nature and inventions from the inner world, the collective unconscious. The key is to trust my intuition.

My work takes its shape without much thought through the composition, colors, forms, and marks; everything comes forward in its own time. The work is to dispel any doubts that may creep up and interfere. I practice being centered and try always to remain in the easy, open state where an immediate action follows every impulse.

Drew King

My work with abstract form, and with this recent series of oil paintings, focuses mainly on shape, form and volume as subject matter. These shapes/forms are based mainly on the square, circle and trapezoid. Building my paintings involves a process of random marking and manipulation.

The effect is both organic and industrial. By layering straight and curved lines my aim is to form gestural constructions that are fluid and evolving. Shifting perspective and viewer interaction is an intended result.

Geoffrey Moss

b. 1938, Brooklyn, NY

My art is about drawing. It is as direct as writing my name. Over the years my work has straddled a line between representational references and a more comfortable place — abstracting and rearranging my memory of what things looked like.

During my working process, shapes become my lexicon, routinely reduced, placed to ultimately explore the interaction of color; masses of paint becoming the *raison d'être* for why I paint. As a working artist, if I am to be categorized at all, I would define myself as a “colorist,” ultimately exploring how paint documents spontaneous movement to communicate the sum reference of a completed personal dialogue. There is a deliberate historical “Americanism” in what I do, not only of centering elements most important to me on a canvas, but also of sustaining a critical awareness of audible silence.

My visual vocabulary allows the privilege to articulate the anatomy of everything I’m curious about: restrictions of the Bauhaus with an intrusion of Russian Constructivism, Chinese medicine labels, religious symbols, vintage comic book colors, 18th C. Japanese Shunga prints and eight years an art restorer at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. All feeding my compulsion to paint, draw and continue the dance.

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Gunnar Theel

b. 1941, Germany

Over the course of his 40-year career German-American artist, Gunnar Theel, has created a rich body of work largely comprised of painting and sculpture. Strongly influenced by the sparsity of the Minimalist and Bauhaus movements, Theel's sculptures reflect an emphasis on simple geometric compositions which bring the piece's foundational elements of geometry, color, and materiality to the forefront. In contrast to his solid, masculine sculptures which explore form, line, and the nature of the specific materials he uses, Theel's paintings are a frenzy of color. Ranging from large, aggressively brushy, abstract color fields, to delicately jumbled multi-colored geometric fragments, to neatly organized lines of controlled brushwork, the artists both explore the nature of the materials he employs as well as the interplay of color.

Regardless of the medium, Theel's objective is to evoke an emotional response in the viewer. His abstract compositions negate a particular narrative or philosophy and instead coax viewers to simply react to the composition.

Gunnar Theel is widely exhibited and has works in the permanent collections of institutions such as the MET and MOCA Jacksonville.

Jeremy Kidd

b. 1962, UK

I aim to present a condensed vision of multiple photographs as a metaphor for repeated perceptual glances. By conveying an animated experience of the dynamic urban infrastructure, this body of work seeks to explore transcendental and emotive qualities in the urban landscape. These idealized arrangements of architecture, light and space introduce the notion of subjective memory in photography, altering the image from its original source.

Through exploring transcendental urban/landscapes it seems unrealistic to expect a single photographic shot, a single moment in time, to convey the human experience of seeing. We visually explore our environment in the third and fourth dimensions as we build our personal visual journey. Composing up to 100 long exposures into a single piece allows me to explore movement and condensed time. It lends itself to my concerns with exemplifying the transcendental and the essence of place.

Though I am not directly referencing (Hudson River School Painters) I draw parallels with the artist's methods and have in mind the often-transcendental qualities that are encountered in their landscapes. However, I aim to extol something of this spirit within the urban context. An "urbanized Idealism".

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Jill Moser

b. 1956, New York, NY

Inspired by semiotics and independent filmmakers of the 1970's, such as Stan Brakhage, Jill Moser explores the dynamics of communication beyond language through her paintings and prints. Moser's compositions are subtle in their balance of positive and negative space and elegant in their organic, curvilinear form. Moser's gestural mark-making serves not only as a documentation of the process by which she creates her work but also as a narrative of how the piece came to be either by her physical mediation of the materials and her movement or by the interaction between the materials the printmaking tools. By experimenting with different forms, techniques, and combinations of painting and printmaking Moser explores how mark making how mark-making effectively 'arrests and action and holds it in its form.'

Laura Fayer

b. 1969, Concord, MA

Abstract painter and printmaker, Laura Fayer, address landscapes and the natural world through an intricate process of layering paint and graphic marks. Deeply influenced by *wabi-sabi*, or the Japanese principle of the beauty in imperfection, Fayer creates her paintings by overlaying translucent washes of color with designs inspired by her background in drawing. Using custom printmaking tools, she either prints directly onto the canvas or collages layers of printed rice paper over the paint. Repeating this process multiple times, Fayer creates a gradual ebb and flow of energy and rest, reminiscent of moments of natural beauty such light across the water's surface.

Laura Moretz

b. 1980, Hickory, NC

Laura Moretz's paintings question the impermanence of form while depicting a state of flux. Through various poured techniques and layered drawings, each layer of Moretz's paintings is informed from the movement of the previous layer. Finding a suspended stillness in the motion of the paint, Moretz's paintings become a meditation on movement, and the constant search for stillness. Moretz's paintings are experimental, energetic, and bold. Each painting is its own laboratory into the macrocosm of the universe.

Mary Manning

b. 1950, Hartford, CT

Mary Manning's abstract paintings and monotypes are recognized for their exuberant color and strong graphic elements. Drawing inspiration from literature, music, nature, and current events, her work reflects a lifelong curiosity of experimentation and commitment to exposure to a wide range of creative endeavors. Of her creative processes, Manning's painting method is slow and considered as she rearranges, adjusts, and develops a painting carefully over a length of time. Alternatively, her process in the print shop is characterized

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by spontaneity and decisive action as she, 'gives [herself] over to the immediacy of the printmaking process.' Prioritizing color above all other aesthetic considerations, Manning gives herself challenges to resolve in each piece such as working with a certain number of prescribed shapes or colors. Ultimately, Manning finds working within set boundaries liberating.

Michael Filan

Michael Filan's painting process has become brushless. The gestures, drips and splashes that unite his work have become increasingly more intricate over time and address viewers in a language that is private, intense and consistently self-referential. Within the context of abstraction, Filan is constantly inventing a new vocabulary that employs gesture, form and notation. The intensity of color is used as a mystical guide that leads him through the creation process. Spatial planes are created on the painting's surface that offer resting points for viewers to pause before further embarking on a journey of exploration.

Oona Ratcliffe

b. 1975, Bolinas, CA

Ratcliffe's paintings, seductive frenzies of color and neon line, are constructed in a framework of loose sensuality. Tending towards the acidic and artificial, saturated color is offset by impenetrable flatness, lyrical line deceived by careful manipulation, intricate image belied by an absence of modeling or brush-stroke. Ratcliffe's work is a play of opposites—an endless search for frozen stillness in a world of constant movement and an inherent tension between outside and inside, transparency and opacity, nature and urbanism.

Robert Szot

b. 1976, Houston, TX

Originally from Houston, Texas, abstract painter, Robert Szot, has been based in Brooklyn, New York since 2001. Szot began pursuing painting as a personal outlet and purposefully avoided pursuing any formal training in order to preserve his authentic voice. Central to his work is Szot's internal process of creation in which he approaches the canvas with no expectations for the final painting. The first stage of each painting is largely contingent on his mood or state of mind at that time, but this emotional acuity becomes less influential as the work progresses and Szot grapples with the painting in a continual process of creating and solving problems both emotionally and within the composition. This process of generating and resolving conflict is reflected in the large scale of his oil paintings, in their gestural composition, and in his colors selections which often fight against one another. Over time, Szot has turned his attention from his initial fascination with New York's history of painting towards his own role within said history and asserts that his objective is to forge and maintain a clear, authentic voice as a painter as he illustrates his internal life over the years.

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Santiago Lozano

b. 1972, Bogota, Colombia

Painter and sculptor, Santiago Lozano, centers his work around the themes of imperfection and collapse. Lozano searches for flaws, quirks, and foibles by exploring such topics as damage in otherwise perfect geometries, capturing the ephemeral moment of collapse in rigid materials and structures, or highlighting and creating compositions around the “error” in an artwork.

Working predominantly in steel and aluminum, Lozano’s sculptures often depict simple geometric shapes, such as rectangular prisms, which have been dented or collapsed in some way. Such imperfections frustrate the expected geometric perfection of the structures in favor of the artist’s hand and all those things that make us truly human.

Sarah Hinckley

b. 1954, Cape Cod, MA

Painter, Sarah Hinckley is best known for her subtle, meditative colour field paintings. Influenced by the work of Mark Rothko and Agnes Martin, Hinckley’s compositions feature bands of soft, neutral colours, often interrupted by painterly drips, textured brushstrokes, or geometric insertions of bolder colour. Additionally, she draws inspiration from her childhood home of Cape Cod, blending the simplicity of colour field with insinuated landscape, incorporating beachy motifs and colour palettes into her clean, colour band compositions. Using watercolours and oils, Hinckley is deeply involved in the process of making and begins each composition with a general direction in mind, often taking up to one year to complete a single painting. Layering colours gradually over time, Hinckley carefully minds the shifts and changes caused as the materials dry or bleed together allowing the process to influence her progress.

Teresa Waterman

b. 1952

Hidden in plain sight, my work is a conceptual point of departure for accidental beauty. Drawing from nature’s elements without vanity, twigs, roots, fallen leaves melting snow, and atmosphere, small differences magnify in my mind into delicate simplicities.

For me, absorbing nature is a way of reaching the ungraspable; the imperfect and mundane emerge with a magical aspect. By immersing myself in the intricacy and depth of what is overlooked, my memory and experiences are informed. Visually catching something only once opens a pathway for working in series. I freely mix mediums hinting at what we see and what is everywhere changing.

The work slips between painting and drawing. I think of my work as floating sentences in nature isolating its most physical presence, a glimpse, a glance, an awareness of what is momentary; fading hints of what we see- reminding us how rare it is, what we remember.

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Zemma Mastin White

b. 1958, Wilmington, DE

Painter and printmaker Zemma Mastin White approaches her work from a formalist perspective to explore the relationships between shapes and colors for their own sake rather than for what they may represent. Using mixed media, such as Flashe and acrylic paint, Cray-Pas, graphite, and paint markers Mastin White layers line, color, and forms to create different patterns and textures through layers of mark making. In particular, she is influenced by urban grid patterns such as subway grates, skeletons of trees, and even the streets and buildings themselves. This attention to the texture and order of urban spaces is reflected in her work, both their grid-like compositions, cacophonous patterns, and muted color palettes.