

# KNIGHT WEBB GALLERY

Karen Silve

*Contemporary Abstractions  
From the Pacific Northwest*



*Sanctuary II 102 x 300 cm, acrylic on canvas*

20<sup>h</sup> November 2015 – 30<sup>th</sup> January 2016

In the spirit of American Abstract Expressionism, Silve exudes spontaneity and passion. Ann Landi, a contributing art critic for *ARTnews*, elegantly describes Silve's work: "To paraphrase the New York School critic Harold Rosenberg, what goes into her canvas is not a picture but an event. ... She brings her whole body to the task of painting as Pollock did, feeling the energy running through her system and imparting a sense of corporeal presence and gesture to paint and canvas."

Painting is Silve's metaphor: her physical world being symbolised by paint, and her spiritual world symbolised in the choreography of the brushstrokes. Her sense of rhythmic space and volume is shared with artists such as Cecily Brown. Her works are as much about people moving through space interacting with one another or with the environment, as they are about the landscapes structural presence. The artist explains "I didn't want to paint "things" but rather a landscape of actions and feelings; relaxed, content, inspired and peaceful.

Silve's 'Market' paintings are recognisable for their unusual contrasting colour combinations. These paintings are about life, community, people and food, whose variations are celebrated in the fascinating coloured symbolism of the Flower Market. In contrast to her 'Market Paintings', the weather and wilderness of the Pacific coast and forests are captured in her 'Nature Series'. A multitude of greens, appear to represent the forest canopy, vertical drips of falling paint feel like rain.

In the painting 'Last Summer', an organic mass is emerging from a series of splintered brushstrokes of iridescent blues, turquoise and varied hues of pink, red and ochre. Similarly the painting 'Market 51' shows us a composition of deep forest green, burning orange and burgundy colours, punctuated by Silve's hallmark drips of white paint, which appear like stellar interventions.

Contemporary Abstractions From the Pacific Northwest continued:

The artist keeps a studio in Provence where she has explored the time-honoured practice of plein-air painting, established by the Impressionists. The Provence landscape offers Silve a sophisticated alternative palette, imbued with the warmth of European history.

*Silve has exhibited throughout the United States, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. In 2014, her work was collected by the new U.S. Consulate in Monterrey, Mexico for their permanent collection. And recently she exhibited in Doha, Qatar as part of the Art in Embassies Program. Early in Silve's painting career, she exhibited at the Jemison-Carnegie Heritage Hall in Alabama and the Tuscaloosa Performing Art Centre. Since then she has exhibited at different Galleries and Universities including The Institute for American Universities in Aix-en-Provence, France, the Portland Centre for the Performing Arts, and was a Resident Artist at Texas A&M University in 2011.*

Acknowledgement's: Ann Landi / Knight Webb Gallery / the artist



*'A Glimpse of a Memory', 117 x 108 cm, acrylic on canvas*

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