

Constance Kheel

Gentle Gravity, Perfect Directness, Bob Towers Series XLII. 1997

Macrylic on Paper

14 $\frac{3}{4}$ X 15 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches

Opening bid: \$950.

Artist's Statement:

Abstract color field art was flourishing when I attended Bennington College in the late 1960s. Some of the most significant contemporary artists of the era worked at the college or lived nearby (Ken Noland, Jules Olitski, David Smith, Tony Caro, to name a few). I was immediately drawn to the vocabulary of abstract art and sought ways in both painting and sculpture to express myself. It was a time of discovery and dissemination of daring visual ideas. In addition to the example set by my talented teachers, I was also moved by the surrounding landscape. The authenticity of the working agricultural landscape with its rolling hills interspersed with fields, woodlands and farmsteads seemed to perfectly complement the creation of ambitious abstract art. I spent many hours driving around on the dirt roads, absorbing the beauty of the scenery. Decades later, having settled in the area, I am still impressed and inspired by the stunning farmland vistas which have changed little over the years. While the imagery in my paintings has remained abstract, the juxtaposition of shapes within unbounded space seems to me to reflect the nature I see every day. There is no doubt in my mind that the years I spent at Bennington College indelibly influenced my artistic vision, which can readily be identified as having been born in the 1960s in Vermont.

Biography:

I was fortunate to have attended a school on the outskirts of New York City which had an exceptionally strong art department. Challenging art projects along with encouragement from teachers led me to Bennington College where I happily immersed myself in abstract art. After graduating, I lived and painted in Germany

for several years. But I was drawn back to the Bennington area. I settled on a farm nearby and immediately converted a barn into a studio. I have been living there ever since. Besides continuing to paint, I have devoted myself to land conservation and preservation of agricultural heritage, founding a non-profit foundation to help further these goals. In particular, I've become involved in barn restoration.

Over the years the imagery in my paintings has evolved to include circles, squares and rectangles intermixed with splashes of colors. As I work simultaneously on multiple paintings, progress is slow and the finished work of art evolves over many months. The art critic Michael Fried best described the lengthy process: they [Connie's paintings] were made slowly and painstakingly, by the application of acrylic paint in thin layers, by the continual adjustment and readjustment of forms, colors and textures to one another, by acts of contemplation leading to countless decisions and revisions, and by a variety of techniques including painting with a brush, pouring thinned paint in translucent veils, and rotating and tilting the stretchers and papers in order to influence the flow of pigment."

Resume:

Constance Kheel works out of her studio in northern Rensselaer County, New York, where she has lived since 1970. After graduating from Bennington College, she lived for three years in Berlin, Germany before moving to her farm in Buskirk. Kheel's paintings have been exhibited both nationally and internationally in one person and group shows. Locations where her work has been exhibited include: New York City, NY; Boston, MA; East Hampton, NY; Bar Harbor Island, FL, South Hampton, NY; Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Southampton, NY; Albany, NY, Pearl River, NY; Bennington, VT; Berlin, Germany and Lincroft, NJ.

Kheel was awarded a Fellowship Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1987.

Her paintings can be found in numerous museum and corporate collections, including the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, CT; Chase

Manhattan Bank, New York City, NY; Citibank, New York City, NY; Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Ithaca, NY; Manhattan Savings Bank, New York City, NY; the Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte, NC; National Gallery of Modern Art of the Dominican Republic, Santo Domingo, DR; Bennington College, Bennington, VT; Newark Museum of Art, Newark, NJ; and the Southeast Banking Corporation, Miami, FL.