

Thick & Thin

In 1939, art critic Clement Greenberg described the historic shift that occurred with the advent of 20th-century Modernism. He noted the break from a portrayal of the world as it actually appeared to be, to a concentration on the creative act of art itself. In other words, gone were the women in large hats or carefully rendered fruit bowls, and in their place were paintings whose subject matter became the gesture of the artist applying the paint, or the color, texture and form of the paint itself. The artists in **Thick & Thin** expand upon the Modernist tradition by exploiting the physicality of their materials and exploring a variety of paint applications from sheer and luminous to dense and sculptural.

Bernhard Hildebrandt's recent series of diptychs pair abstract paintings with photographic portraits of those paintings, to question the nature of reality and the "truth" of the art-object. His monochromatic paintings composed of polyurethane enamel on aluminum or Plexiglas are so smooth and glossy that they reflect the gaze of the viewer and thus emphasize the importance of outside perception over artistic intention. The color photographs act not as surrogates but as amplifiers by revealing the textures and imperfections of the paintings' surfaces not readily visible to the naked eye. When placed together, the diptychs become compelling references to the physical and temporal act of creation.

Joanne Kent extends paint's capacity to create form by transforming what is traditionally a two-dimensional material into an evocative three-dimensional form. Her highly tactile creations confront the viewer's expectations and compel the sense of touch; thus, transforming "paintings" from the imagined to the real. Selecting the bright primary colors of red, blue, yellow and green, she also creates an association with childhood and the physical process of discovery.

Sandi Ritchie Miller maximizes the unique fluid property of enamel when she pours the liquid paint onto Plexiglas in her vivid and swirling works. By painting multiple layers on this surface, she builds depth, allowing the observer to transcend the confines of the picture plane to what looks and feels like a portrayal of the cosmos. The most prominent visual element of her work becomes movement, fashioned out of the bursts of light that effuse energy and encourage reaction through an improvisational and kinetic composition.

June Shadoan investigates the process of applying thick layers of color, one on top of the other, to achieve the dual illusion of simultaneously shallow and deep space. She spreads her paint directly onto the canvas using a knife, spatula, or brush and then mixes them on the canvas itself. Only recently producing small-scale works, the artist notes, "*Color is an important element in arriving at a feeling of power within limited dimensions.*"

Having mastered the technique of pouring paint onto canvas, **Mary Shand's** works possess a direction of flow, dripping downward, moving along central veins, or even pooling into the center of a weighted canvas. The natural properties of liquid paint mimic the movement and unpredictability that she observed in nature. The reference to a vast landscape is also communicated by the varied dimensions of the lines and their corresponding negative spaces.

In **Diane Szczepaniak's** paintings, color acts as a conduit to manifest essentially metaphysical references of space and essence. Using thin and seemingly weightless veils of watercolor, she manipulates the translucency of the medium to produce both a richness of hue and the illusion of form that exists beyond the surface of her work.

***Thick & Thin is curated by N. Elizabeth Schlatter and Gwen Van Ostern.
The exhibition is dedicated to the art and life of Mary Shand (1929-2003).