

Erin Palazzolo

commotion

works on paper

Convergence and Dissipation in the work of Erin Palazzolo

by D.F.Colman

The primary aspect of Erin Palazzolo's work on paper, that compels the eye, is her sustained, nearly virtuosic capacity to invoke the sensation of contained energy. The artist easily and gracefully capitalizes on such energetics which in turn allows for open space of possibility to emerge in each work. Within this space, Palazzolo's visual dynamic alternates between graceful limpidity and frenetically charged passages.

Artist's work shares characteristics with much abstract art that is being produced today. Namely, a key concern with the critical and the ecstatic as invested in the nature of the painterly mark. Palazzolo's unrelated ambiguities offer us the grounds for interpretive conflict. Out of those speculations which flow from one stream of consideration to another in terms of meaning is the evaluation of the painter's evident determination to remain attached to essential themes.

Thematically, Palazzolo's abstract imagery offers us a tantalizing ambiguity, an allowance for imaginal flow which derives from the artist's emphasis of material trace through the brushstroke. The brushstroke, that is the artist's touch creates a dynamic field in works such as *Tipping* (2006), *Kinetic* (2002) and *Wood of the Cross* (2003). The three different expressive elements that we find here bring the viewer into a dynamic visual field which could only be experienced as a dynamic one as it brings together both poetry and the unanticipated.

Certainly, one of the main interpretive offerings that the artist confronts us with is, for example, the remarkable capacity for a work such as *Wood of the Cross* to remind us historically speaking of Clement Greenberg's "American style painting" which emphasized material trace over painterly activity and unified image over expressive detail (more than less) while works such as *Tipping* and *Kinetic* cleaves more towards Harold Rosenberg's classification of "action painting" which did the reverse. These issues are, of course, relational as the figure – ground relationships oscillate ever so slightly, yet it is fair to say that for Erin Palazzolo the certain dialectical tension that tends to be maintained between these poles is not only the achievement in her work, it is essential to the free-play that permeates her work. In *Tipping* for example, the interaction with gravity is at a greater or lesser pitch than in *Kinetic* and the abdication of such control to the forces of nature are reined in to create an unruly gesturalism which energizes the propulsive and frenetic (rather than more languid) space in *Wood of the Cross*. This extraordinary work might be said to participate more fully in the Abstract Expressionist heritage and its dramatizations of conflict.

In each of these three works (however different they may appear to be) the considerations of visual pleasure which embrace a wide continuum of complex feeling on the part of Erin Palazzolo permeate her work. Such considerations not only remind us that abstract painting and drawing is never a closed system but rather is a constant negotiation in gestural terms between the forces of order and disorder, dissipation and convergence. The conflation of a certain type of visual concentration and pressure with a corresponding mindfulness regarding the enlivening effects of abandon and release in pictorial terms often results in one thing: high artistic achievement.

Such achievement is possible only under two conditions which must occur in tandem. Erin Palazzolo's work fulfills those conditions which are the application of passionate introspection along with dispassionateness and distance. The visceral impact on the viewer makes this artist's work an unforgettable experience. It remains so as the artist breaks down considerations of mere knowledge and information for us, bringing us to an anterior frame of mind and spirit. We find ourselves arriving within an imminent space of becoming in which pure recognition becomes the dominant order.

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