

An abstract painting with a dense, textured surface. The composition is dominated by shades of grey, blue, and white, with scattered accents of red, orange, and black. The brushwork is visible and expressive, creating a sense of movement and depth. The overall effect is one of a complex, layered visual field.

BARBARA LAUBE

Barbara Laube

New Paintings

March 8 - March 29, 2018

The Case for Barbara Laube

Barbara Laube has always painted. From early childhood her prodigious ability to render and paint from direct observation was undeniable to all around her. Her decades-long practice seeks life's "meaning"; it reflects her relationship to the outside world through various hybrid tropes of landscape and figurative-infused abstraction.

As I find myself in this moment of great and much-needed reevaluation of gender and race in art world politics (becoming a curator and gallerist and writer later in my life after decades of just painting) my evaluation of Laube's place in the art world (not her work) becomes unavoidably seen through this prism. In an art world where museum and gallery exposure has been disproportionately populated by artists who can be easily marketed because of their youth, persona or commercially package-able work, Laube has been overlooked for these, and many other complex reasons. Her work demands and deserves a broader audience.

Going to various studios looking at work in the role of gallerist and curator, I find that I have come to champion artists who I deem to possess a profound level and depth of commitment to their studio practice and the life they live which serves that end. Barbara Laube is one of these artists. Laube's studio/apartment is filled, wall to wall, with her work, her materials and the work of other artists that she loves. It's appropriate that her "living room" is her studio - there is no separation between Laube's studio, her practice and her life and that is what makes her painting authentic, beautiful and powerful.

She works, with equal mastery, in scales from the intimate 11" x 11" to a larger 64" x 38", which reflects the maximum reach of her body and the full potential of her space. Her paintings are attacked, slathered and scraped, reworked by any means necessary, some for years, until Laube finds the moment where the color, surface, forms and complex narratives just lock, and the meaning of the work emerges for her.

"I paint the way I do because I can keep on putting more and more things in – like drama, pain, anger, love, a figure, a horse, my ideas of space. It doesn't matter if it differs from mine, as long as it comes from the painting, which has its own integrity and intensity." - Willem de Kooning

Laube comes from the painting tree of Goya, Van Gogh, Soutine, de Kooning, Mitchell, Auerbach, Resnick, Joop Sanders (her teacher) Leroy, among others (Renaissance painting, Medieval Manuscripts,

Indian miniatures are among her other loves) and extends and makes that language her own by making work so painfully personal, honest, fragile, angry and meditative at all once that one cannot help but be moved by the works on their own terms.

There are commonalities between her work and the obsessively reworked surfaces and impasto paint found in terrific contemporary painters such as Farrell Brickhouse, Rodney Dickson and Joel Longenecker, but I cite these affinities to bring into sharp focus the differences that emerge from these comparisons, which I believe reveal Laube's strength. In the work of the aforementioned painters, much of the power of their work can be found through a muscularity and resolution in their picture making. Much of the power of Laube's work is due to their irresolution, which creates an opening and vulnerability all her own and singular among her contemporaries.

"Spiritually I am wherever my spirit allows me to be, and that is not necessarily in the future... Art never seems to make me peaceful or pure. I always seem to be wrapped in the melodrama of vulgarity." - Willem de Kooning

Her most recent works such as *Shaman*, *Portal* and *Occupy Your Body* in which various states of self-portraiture emerge, there is an aspect which cannot help but be seen (and confirmed in conversation with artist) of a response to the #MeToo movement and perhaps an unconscious retort to de Kooning's women series. Her endless series of marks, micro adjustments and color exchanges create simultaneous flat abstract picture planes and conventional picture space that recedes, as well as figures that emerge and disappear.

Only someone brave enough to be lost and to ask questions that may never be answered can achieve this complex mastery of multiple readings and formal adjustments. Laube is a rhythm painter, all intuition, guts and skill. Combining fat oil, a restless spirit that at times is angry, gentle, fragile and powerful, she creates an exquisite vulnerability that actualizes the carnal and the temporal, giving voice to what is silent and within. In painting as in life I believe you want the same things; freedom, courage and integrity, if one uses that moral compass in one's painting, the work will always be strong and true. Laube's compass points due North.

Michael David, Painter and Curator, 2018

Blazing Grace
2017
Oil on canvas
11 x 11 inches



Not Quite Here Yet
2017
Oil on canvas
11 x 11 inches



Medium
2017
Oil on canvas, mixed media
11 x 11 inches



Energy and Consciousness for Kristina
2017
Oil on canvas
11 x 11 inches



Entities
2017
Oil on canvas
11 x 11 inches



Omega
2017
Oil on canvas
11 x 11 inches



Orbs Over the Casa
2017
Oil on canvas, mixed media
11 x 11 inches



Releasing
2017
Oil on canvas
9 x 12 inches



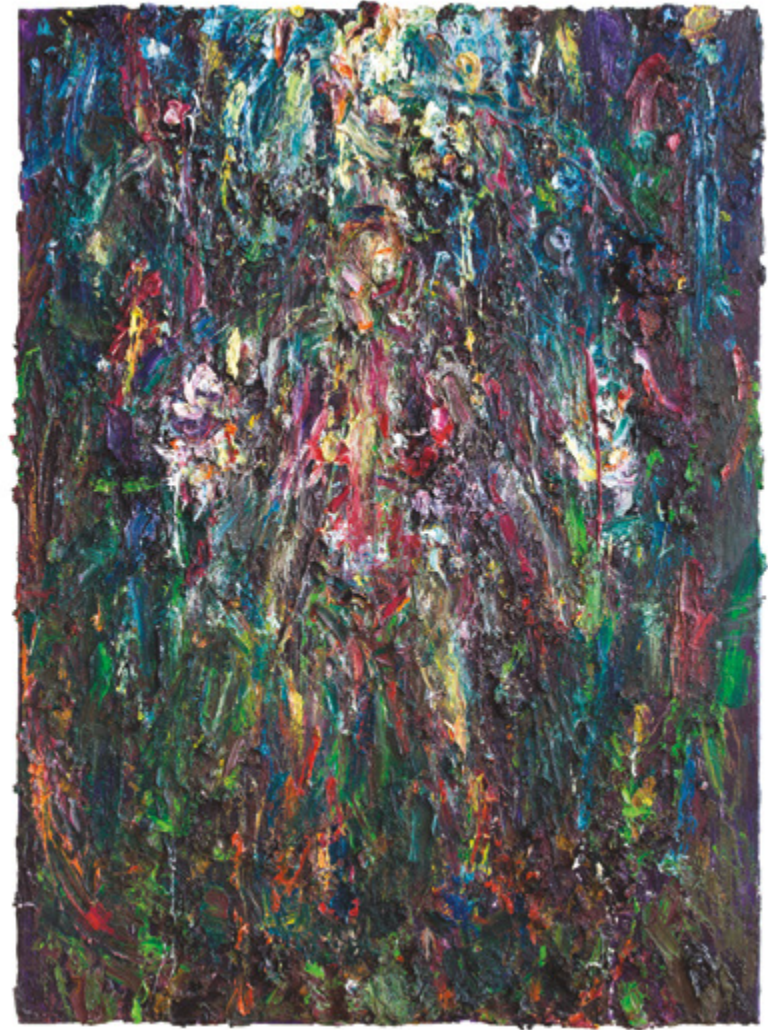
Sacred Waterfall
2018
Oil on canvas
60 x 20 inches



Occupy Your Body
2018
Oil on canvas
64 x 38 inches



Occupy Your Body 2
2018
Oil on canvas
40 x 30 inches



Shaman
2018
Oil on canvas
36 x 24 inches



Incorporating Into
2018
Oil on canvas
36 x 24 inches



Portal
2015 - 2018
Oil on canvas
44 x 30 inches



Barbara Laube

For me the act of painting is spiritual, shamanistic (healing) and transformative. "Truth" is found through process and the materiality of paint. Rooted in the history of Abstraction, my subject matter may not be obvious; and always left open to interpretation. It emerges from the rhythm of my endless mark making and adjustments to the surface, and the play between intentionality and the use of the subconscious.

This struggle oftentimes reveals an imagery that reflects my relationship to the outside world and my life, whether it be a landscape where my Mother's ashes have been scattered, a self-portrait, a waterfall that heals, or just my deep love of great painting and my connection to its history and future. In the end, the act of painting and paint itself is first and foremost and has always been my way of making sense of my life, who I am, what I love and what I believe in.

Largely self-taught, Ms. Laube has studied in Italy, France and Germany. She also had the good fortune to study in New York with Joop Sanders, a founding member, along with Willem de Kooning and Milton Resnick, of the American Abstract Expressionist group. She has studied at Pratt Institute, New York Studio School, and the School of Visual Arts.

Ms. Laube's paintings have been featured in shows in New York, New Jersey, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Texas, Illinois, and Washington State. She has shown at The Carter Burden Gallery, New York, NY, and will have a solo show at The Painting Center, New York, NY in April 2019. Among other exhibitions are The Outsider Art Fair, New York, NY; David Schweitzer Contemporary, Brooklyn, NY; Trestle Gallery, Brooklyn, NY; The Bowery Gallery, New York, NY; The Hope Horn Gallery, The University of Scranton, Scranton, PA; The Painting Center, New York, NY; Life on Mars Gallery, Brooklyn NY; Cheryl Hazan Gallery, New York, NY; Wave Hill House, Bronx, New York; Kleinert/James Gallery, Woodstock, NY; Pierro Gallery, South Orange, NJ; Runnells Gallery, Eastern New Mexico University, Portales, NM; and Long Island University, C.W. Post Campus, New York. Her work is included in numerous public and private collections across the country.

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