

## Deborah Bigeleisen - Sublime Chaos

Throughout my art career, and my life, I have continually looked for new challenges. Artistically, this has resulted in finding new voices within me. After working for more than four years on groups of conceptual paintings in analogous tonalities, tones of grays and beiges, and blacks and whites, I was looking for what's next. My discovery of fractals had transformed my vision of a flower by progressively magnifying the subject thousands of times to the point of pure abstraction. Never having considered myself an abstract thinker, thus began my exploration into abstract art. A journey I call Sublime Chaos, because at the onset, my vision and my studio were in utter chaos.

I have had many serendipitous events impact my art career. Stumbling upon the inspiration for the abstracts was just the latest in a long line of such occurrences. At Art Miami in December, 2015, I came across a color-field painting on unprimed canvas by a lesser known artist of the period - Irene Monat Stern. I was immediately awestruck and captivated by everything about the painting. Although the colors were very dull, it did not matter; it was the big bold forms, how she layered her colors, and the texture that excited me. The fact that the painting loosely suggested a flower drew me to the work even more.

I knew that in order to achieve these effects I had to switch to acrylic paint. After working in oils for 16 years, making that switch was a major commitment. It involved turning my studio and my painting process upside down including learning how to manipulate the paint, using different mediums, different brushes, and working on a flat surface instead of an easel.

While I was researching the color-field artists, their materials, their painting techniques, and solving some technical issues related to painting on unprimed canvas - which I am really drawn to because of how the paint interacts with the canvas - I was looking at one of Paul Jenkins' colorful very "blobby" paintings and played with recreating it on the unprimed canvas. That was the spark that really energized me.

I have always loved working with color. I felt this was the time to break away from the subtle transitions of color that I had worked with for so long and go after something completely new - creating bold multi-color vibrant paintings. Paul Jenkins' work appeals to my artist senses - his colors, the movement, the spontaneity, and the 'happy accidents.'

Initially I felt that by replicating some of Jenkins' work on primed canvas it would give me the creative road map to a destination of abstract work I hadn't yet defined. By emulating his bold splashes of color, the bleeding water color effects, the drippy paint, and other elements of his work, I thought it would teach me a freedom with the paint that I had never experimented with before.

Now I was at the point of how do I bring my voice into the work? I had no intentions of channeling Jenkins forever, his work was only a tool. The more I played with the paint, and became more comfortable with everything, I started 'letting go,' and my own voice was surfacing. The whole transition ignited an entirely new artistic inventiveness and spontaneity that I never knew I possessed. Yet, the key elements that have defined my work - my brush work, my expertise with layered transparencies, and my innate sense of color are merging into the abstracts, and giving the work a distinctive and unique voice.

I am still captivated with working on unprimed canvas, and intend to continue experimenting. For now though, I feel that I have barely touched the surface with working on primed canvas. It is a whole new creative paradigm for me and I love the newness, the challenge, the unending discoveries, and the unpredictability of what's down that creative road.