

An abstract painting by Joan Snyder, featuring a complex composition of layered colors and textures. The background is a mix of light and dark tones, with prominent horizontal bands of yellow, green, and blue. A large, vertical, diamond-shaped shape in the center-right is filled with a vibrant red color, surrounded by dark, textured brushstrokes. The overall style is expressive and gestural, with visible brushwork and a sense of movement.

# JOAN SNYDER

...and seeking the sublime



# J o a n S n y d e r

*...and seeking the sublime*

with an essay by Klaus Ottmann

NIELSEN GALLERY Boston MA

September 13 - October 18 2008



## *From Grief to Spring*

I who make a profession of mute things.  
– Nicolas Poussin<sup>1</sup>

It is extremely difficult to speak about meaning  
and to say something meaningful about it.  
– Algirdas Julien Greimas<sup>2</sup>

Roland Barthes saw criticism as a theoretical act that deconstructs and then reconstructs a “text” (which can be a poem, a musical composition, or a work of art), thereby retracing, as “reader,” the original creative activity and the challenges writers and artists face in their pursuit of the inexpressible or nonrepresentable (that which will always remain out of bounds but nonetheless continuously beckons to be represented and lies at the core of the *Human Condition*).

With the advent of the *aesthetics of the sublime* in the eighteenth century (with the publications of Edmund Burke’s *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* and Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*), the notion of the sublime has haunted artists ever since, with some celebrating it as a *fait accompli* (Barnett Newman<sup>3</sup> and Yves Klein, foremost, come to mind) and others striving to catch hold of it, if only for an instance (Joan Snyder belongs in this group, together with Mark Rothko, Anselm Kiefer, Cy Twombly, etc.). As communication without communication, it has pushed art toward an *écriture blanche* (Sartre), colorless writing, or “zero degree” of painting (Barthes) – toward a *style of absence* (e.g., Robert Ryman’s white canvases or Yves Klein’s *Le Vide*<sup>4</sup>). As Barthes once remarked, “silence only becomes a sign when one makes it speak.”<sup>5</sup>

\*

In the following pages I will attempt a textual reading of Joan Snyder’s most recent painting, *From Grief to Spring* (2008, plate 2) - “textual” understood here in Roland Barthes’s sense of a production of *signifiance*,<sup>6</sup> not as a philological or art historical object. Barthes has described *signifiance* as a “process in the course of which the ‘subject’ of the text ... struggles with meaning and is deconstructed (‘lost’), *signifiance* – and this is what immediately distinguishes it from signification.”<sup>7</sup> This structuralist-phenomenological reading of *From Grief to Spring* will also take into account her *process* of painting by looking at her initial sketch on paper as well as various earlier stages of the painting, which were documented by the artist photographically.

When I first viewed *From Grief to Spring* in Snyder’s studio in May of 2008, it was in a significantly different state from that which is reproduced here and exhibited in the exhibition. It appeared to be strongly related to an earlier work, *Ghosts* (2000, figure 1). Both paintings contained words

that had been hidden by overpainting in the final stages. Both are identical in size: six by eight feet; their height approximately that of the average male human figure (corresponding precisely with Leonardo's drawing of the ideal proportions of the so-called *Vitruvian Man*.) *Ghosts* is made up of two vertical wooden panels covered with linen and mounted side by side, with the paint applied continuously across both panels, while *From Grief to Spring* consists of a single, horizontal canvas.

The only words still visible in *Ghosts* are *The DEAD*, which is the remnant of a longer quotation from T.S. Eliot's play *The Family Reunion*: "Do the dead want to return?"<sup>8</sup>

The painting appears to depict a sea-coast landscape of flowers, sand, and water; the prevalent colors are blue, red, and yellow. Dabs of red paint suggestive of flowers between strokes of yellow dominate the upper part of the canvas, while the lower portion is filled with patches of straw affixed to the canvas and mixed with white paint. There are also some dabs of blue amid the bold strokes of black and blue that cover words no longer visible.



Figure 1



Figure 2

Several words were written initially onto *From Grief to Spring*: *SEED*, on the upper right, in dark green; *SEED CATCHERS*, on the lower right, very close to the edge of the canvas, also in green; *END OF MARCH OLIVER*, along the right side of the lower edge of the paintings, in greenish-yellow (figure 2). All of them were overpainted in the final stage of the painting, not long after my visit to the artist's studio.

Words hidden beneath layers of paint are not the only link between the two paintings. Both paintings are linked with spring and death. Spring has a special significance in Snyder's life. In a text written by the artist for a previous catalogue she wrote about *Ghosts*: "I have always felt that 'April is the cruelest month'<sup>9</sup> ... has been my whole life ... in the spring, the month I was born ... when I always had my little and bigger nervous breakdowns and even a miscarriage and then on the bottom of the painting writing [T.S. Eliot's] words again 'Do the dead want to return?' because surely my mother has been in my studio all summer haunting me."<sup>10</sup>

Oliver was the name of Snyder's lost child. (Her miscarriage in the spring of 1978 was followed by the birth of her daughter, Molly, in 1979.) In Eliot's *The Family Reunion*, a modern-day retelling of Aeschylus's *Oresteia*, the springtime family reunion in celebration of the homecoming of the eldest son, Harry, for what would be his mother's last birthday, is haunted by the drowning of his wife by his own hand. Harry compares spring with the return of the dead, telling Mary, his distant cousin, "Spring is an issue of blood / A season of sacrifice / ... Do not the ghosts of the drowned / Return to land in the spring? / Do the dead want to return?" Mary replies, "... I believe the moment of birth / Is when we have knowledge of death."<sup>11</sup>

All painting is a matter of life and death. It is, to paraphrase Kierkegaard, *painting onto death*. Each creative act mimics the birth of a child, and with every new painting, death creeps into the picture; or as Sartre aptly observed, "Nothingness lies coiled in the heart of being."<sup>12</sup>

For more than forty years, Joan Snyder has been seeking the sublime in her work, painting between life and death, silence and speech, emptiness and fullness. One of her earliest paintings, *White Layers with Red Rectangle* (1969) is a veritable exercise in absence, *écriture blanche*, while *Ghosts* is a composition *unto death*.

*From Grief to Spring* constitutes somewhat of a departure. In an email Snyder told me that the previous summer at her studio in Willow, N.Y. had been for her "a very very peaceful productive time where I felt like I was reaching something in the work that I had never gotten to before." This could explain her decision to shift the mood of the painting from death back to life, as spring turned to early summer (metaphorically speaking since the painting was actually done the following winter into spring).

One of the most remarkable aspects of Snyder's creative process is the way she conceives her paintings and prepares them for execution. *From Grief to Spring* began, as do all of Snyder's paintings, on a sketchbook page, with a basic drawing of shapes and elements. Alternating between a pen and a pencil, she made a number of decisions on various elements: a tree-branch-like or animal-shaped lines in the center of the painting that extends into the upper left corner; a number of "pockets" to be filled with seeds; a white background, black seeds, and red cherries, thereby determining the basic color scheme of the painting. The initial drawing for *From Grief to Spring* is dated 11/17/07 (figure 3). It also features a number of occurrences of the word "ghosts." On 2/10/08 Snyder added more drawing and several comments: "Grey wash over linen - white ghosts?" (the "white ghosts" ultimately became red, sparkling presences), and: "Painting yes / black seeds / red cherries." (Snyder routinely reworks her sketches multiple times, always adding a date for each addition or reworking, and it is not unusual to find several "yesses" written on a sketch.) There is also a notation on the lower right for a print to be made based on the sketch: "run berries thru press or press by hand + burlap run ghost spill run plate w. cheesecloth / print."

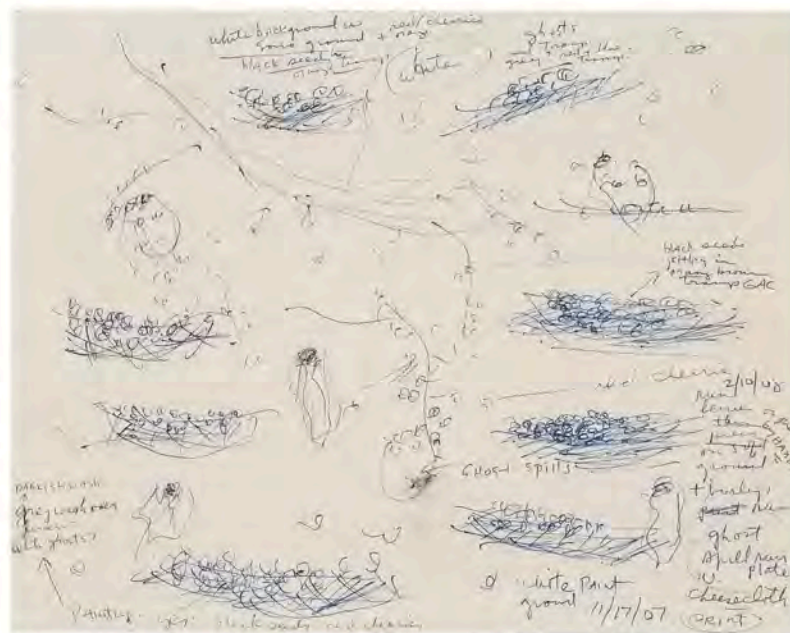


Figure 3

The early stages of painting closely follow the final sketch (figure 4), except for the lines at the center, which now have a smaller “double” beside it. Patches of white paint cover much of the canvas like Sartre’s “little pools of non-being.”<sup>13</sup> The central lines, made from dark-gray papier mâché, stand out starkly from the sweeps of white paint and now appears to me even more theriomorphic, bringing to mind shamanistic cave animal paintings, such as those found on the walls of the recently discovered Chauvet Cave in the Ardèche region in south-central France. (I should note that Snyder herself has always read these lines as tree branches. According to her, the painting began as a landscape in her new upstate studio with views of the mountains and trees.)



Figure 4

Subsequently, the papier-mâché lines are lightened with a wash of white paint, then built up further with red paint, and finally muted again with another wash of white. Burlap stripes are attached to hold the “seeds” and more color is introduced: yellow, red, and blue.

Then the burlap pockets, identified in the drawing as “seed catchers,” are filled with dried seeds, painted over with washes of transparent Indian yellow or black paint that is allowed to drip below. Breast-like circles of dripping, light- and dark-red paint mixed with glitter (the “ghosts”) that suggest bleeding wounds are dispersed throughout, and dabs of red paint (the “cherries”) are added in various places. Finally, the words are covered with yellow-green or grey paint.

In all, the materials used in the painting are oil, acrylic, pastel, burlap, papier-mâché, silk, cheesecloth, seeds, and glitter.

In addition to literature, Snyder is deeply influenced by music, which she listens to while working. She structures her paintings more like musical compositions than works of visual art. The pianist Alfred Brendel once remarked that while a piece of music takes place in time, leading from the beginning to the end, a picture rests in itself; it “continually paints itself.”<sup>14</sup> Snyder told me during our studio visit that she had heard Paul Simon talk about his process of songwriting. Considered one of the greatest lyricists of all times, Simon begins not with the lyrics but with the music, especially the rhythm of drums. She felt an immediate kinship with this backward process. Snyder begins with a formalist, intuitive sketch, and by the end of a process of writing and editing, which can stretch over two or three years, often narrative elements or stories emerge that might not have been there at the outset. The actual painting is usually accomplished in a relatively short period of time, although it, too, goes through numerous changes. Like a reversed musical composition, Snyder’s paintings reach backwards in time – from the final painting all the way to the initial sketch on paper.

Klaus Ottmann



<sup>1</sup> Correspondance de Nicolas Poussin, ed. Ch. Jouanny (Paris: H. Champion, 1911), 16.

<sup>2</sup> A.J. Greimas, *Du sens* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1970), 7.

<sup>3</sup> See his essay "The Sublime is Now," first published in *Tiger's Eye* 6 (December 1948).

<sup>4</sup> On the evening of April 28, 1958, at Galerie Iris Clert in Paris, Klein exhibited the "Void" in an exhibition entitled "The Refinement of Sensibility in the First Material State into Stabilized Pictorial Sensibility" by painting the entire gallery white and presenting the seemingly empty space to the curious public waiting outside.

<sup>5</sup> R. Barthes, *The Neutral*, trans. R.E. Krauss and D. Hollier (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 26.

<sup>6</sup> An untranslatable term first proposed by Julia Kristeva.

<sup>7</sup> R. Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*, trans. S.Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 10.

<sup>8</sup> T.S. Eliot, *Complete Poems and Plays, 1909-1950* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co, 1980), 251.

<sup>9</sup> A reference to T.S. Eliot's opening lines of *The Waste Land*: "April is the cruellest month, breeding / Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing / Memory and desire, stirring / Dull roots with spring rain ..." (*Complete Poems and Plays*, 37).

<sup>10</sup> *Joan Snyder: Primary Fields* (New York: Robert Miller Gallery, 2001).

<sup>11</sup> *Complete Poems and Plays*, 251.

<sup>12</sup> J.-P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, trans. Haze E. Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1972), 56.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>14</sup> *Me of All People: Alfred Brendel in Conversation with Martin Meyer* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 2002), 74.

Klaus Ottmann is Robert Lehman Adjunct Curator at the Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, N.Y. and the author of *The Genius Decision: The Extraordinary and the Postmodern Condition* (2004) and *Thought Through My Eyes: Writings on Art, 1977-2006* (2006).

Figure 1: *Ghosts*, 2000, oil, acrylic, papier mâché, silk, burlap, straw on canvas panel (diptych), 72" x 96", photograph by Steven Sloman, Private Collection

Figure 2: Studio view of *From Grief to Spring*, photograph by Klaus Ottmann

Figure 3: Sketch of *From Grief to Spring*, 2007, pen, pencil on paper, photograph by Jack Abraham

Figure 4: Studio view of *From Grief to Spring*, photograph by Klaus Ottmann



Plate 2 *From Grief to Spring* 2008 72" x 96"











Plate 7 *Symphony VI* 2006 60" x 84"





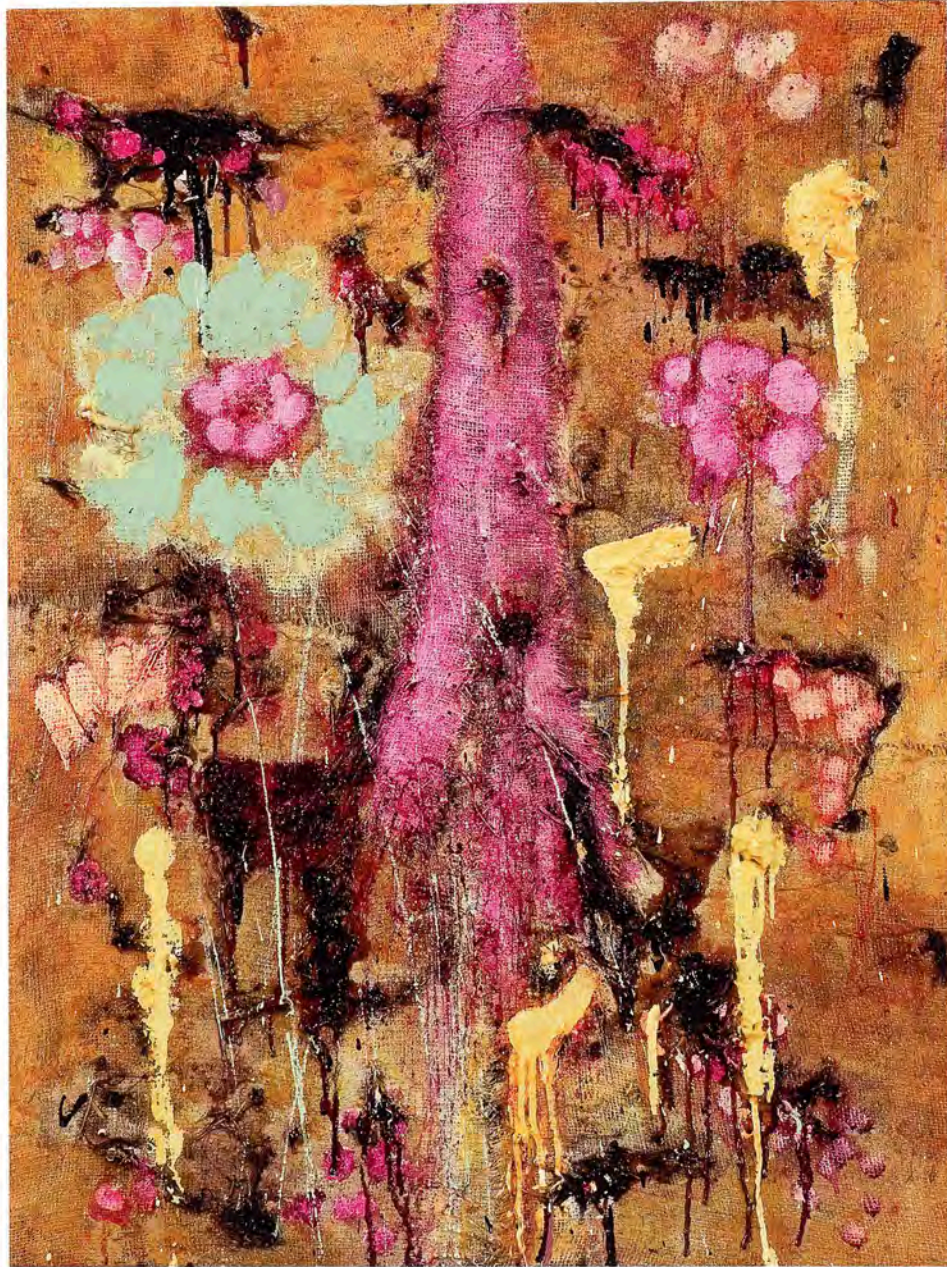


Plate 9 *Pink Totem* 2008 40" x 30"



Plate 10 *Seed Catchers* 2007 36" x 48"





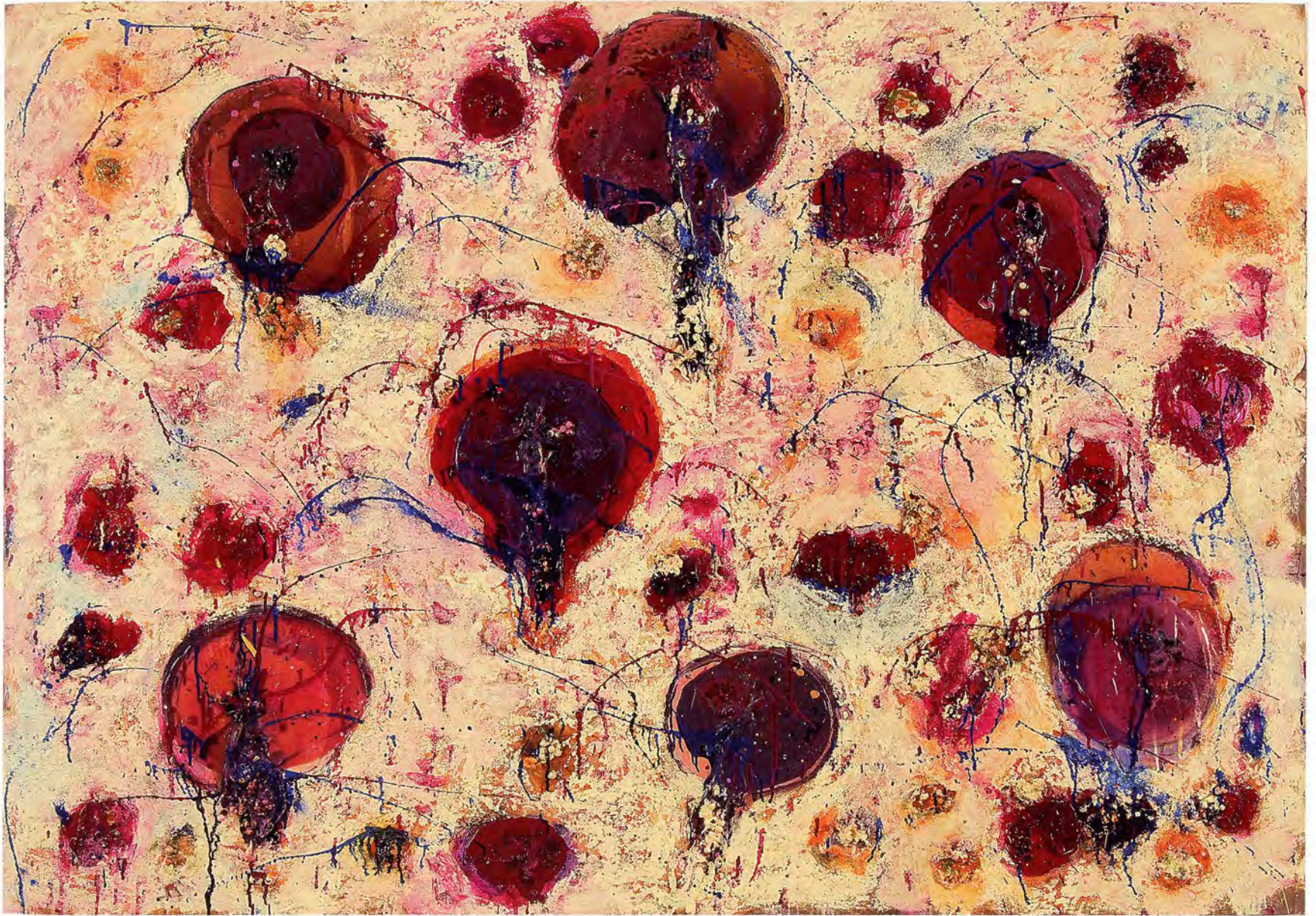
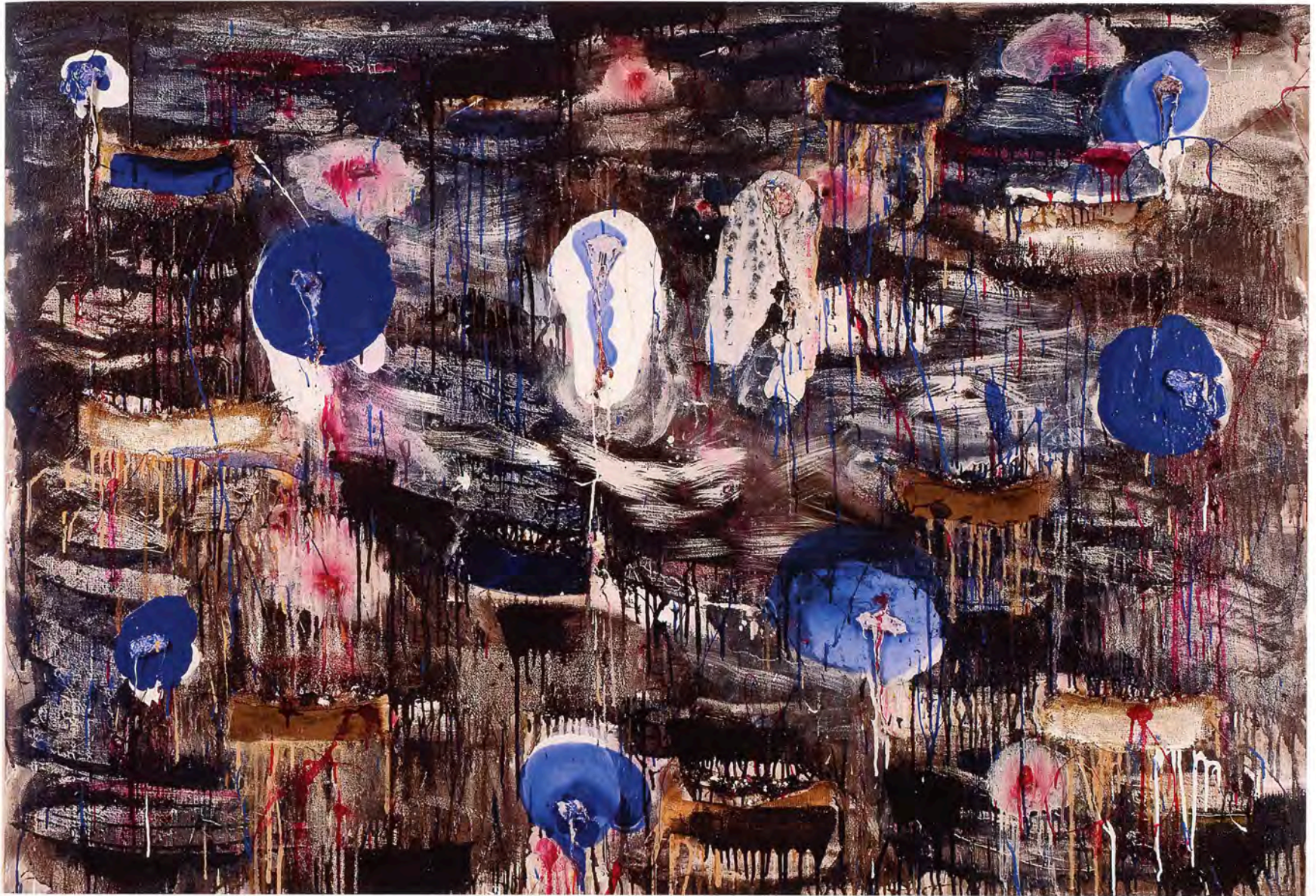


Plate 13 *Ode and Joy* 2008 48" x 68"









## Checklist

Plate 1) *White Layers with Red Rectangle*

1969, acrylic and spray enamel on canvas, 50" x 74"

Collection of Joan Snyder

Plate 2) *From Grief to Spring*

2008, oil, acrylic, berries, cloth, burlap, papier mâché, pastel, on linen, 72" x 96"

Plate 3) *Lines and Strokes*

1969, oil, acrylic, and spray enamel on raw canvas, 40" x 52"

Collection of Joan Snyder

Plate 4) *Ode to Willow*

2007, oil, acrylic, herbs, seeds, papier mâché, cloth, pastel, on linen (diptych), 48" x 72"

Plate 5) *Late Summer Pond*

2006, acrylic, papier mâché, fabric, paper, on linen, 48" x 68"

Plate 6) *Moonfield*

1986, oil and acrylic on canvas, 48" x 60"

Private Collection

Plate 7) *Symphony VI*

2006, oil, acrylic, papier mâché, fabric, straw, chalk, glitter on linen, 60" x 84"

Plate 8) *Sustained*

2007, oil, acrylic, seeds, glitter, pastel, cloth, papier mâché on linen, 54" x 72"

Plate 9) *Pink Totem*

2008, acrylic, herbs, rosebuds, on burlap on canvas, 40" x 30"

Plate 10) *Seed Catchers*

2007, oil, acrylic berries, papier mâché, burlap, on canvas, 36" x 48"

11) *Flesh Art*

1973-74, oil, acrylic, thread, needle, seeds on canvas, 24" x 24"

Private Collection

Plate 12) *A Girl's Life*

2008, acrylic, herbs, rosebuds, velvet on burlap, 36" x 48"

Plate 13) *Ode and Joy*

2008, oil, acrylic, wooden beads, cloth, glitter on linen, 48" x 68"

Plate 14) *Apple Tree Mass*

1983, oil, acrylic, papier mâché, wood, paper, cloth on linen, 24" x 72"  
Collection of Maggie Cammer

Plate 15) *New Moonfield*

2008, acrylic, burlap, silk, cheesecloth, wooden beads, papier mâché on linen, 54" x 78"

Plate 16) *Life of a Tree*

2007, oil, acrylic, cloth, berries, papier mâché, glitter, nails, pastel, on linen, 48" x 68"

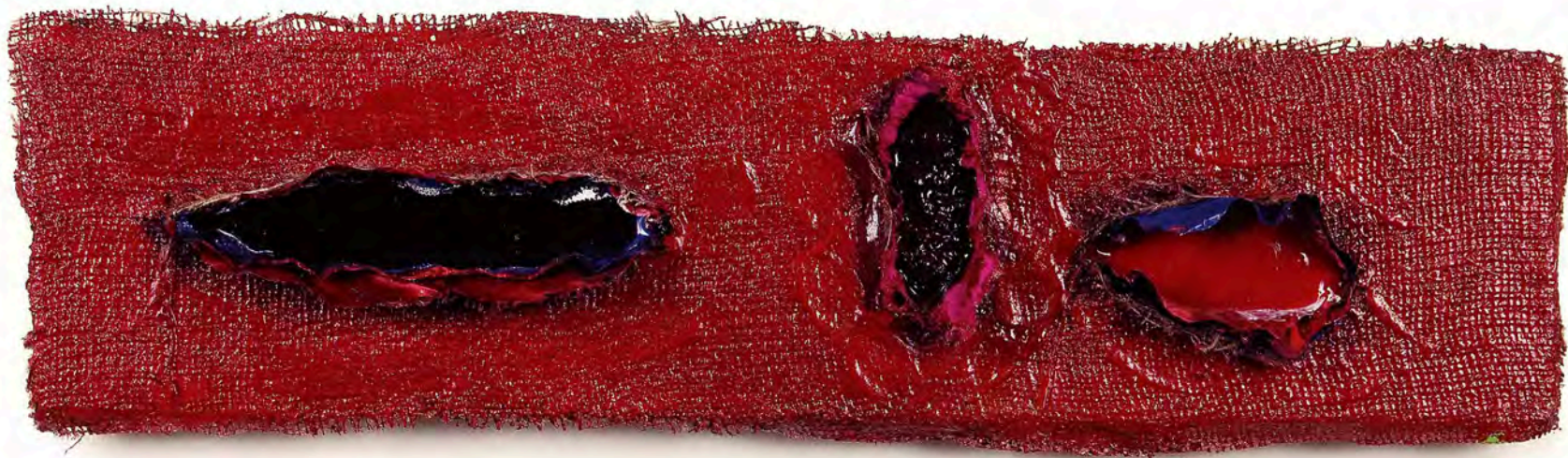
Plate 17) *Burlap Beauty*

2008, acrylic, seeds, burlap, on wood panel, 18" x 18"

Plate 18) *Three Openings*

2008, acrylic, burlap, silk, berries, on linen, 6" x 26"





# Joan Snyder

Born April 16, 1940, in Highland Park, NJ, she received her A.B. from Douglass College, New Brunswick, NJ in 1962 and her M.F.A. from Rutgers, The State University, New Brunswick, NJ, in 1966. She currently lives and works in Brooklyn and Woodstock, NY

## Awards

MacArthur Foundation Genius Award (2007)  
John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship (1983)  
National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship (1974)

## Monograph

Hayden Herrera, Jenni Sorkin, and Norman Kleeblatt. *Joan Snyder*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2005.

## Public Collections

Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin, OH  
Allentown Art Museum, Allentown, PA  
American Can Company, Greenwich, CT  
BankAmerica Corporation, San Francisco, CA  
Ball State University Museum of Art, Muncie, ID  
Chase Manhattan Bank, New York, NY  
Corcoran Gallery, Washington, DC  
Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX  
Danforth Museum, Framingham, MA  
First Church of Christ Scientist, Boston, MA  
Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, MA  
Grand Rapids Art Museum, Grand Rapids, MI  
High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA  
J. B. Speed Art Museum, Louisville, KY  
The Jewish Museum, New York, NY  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY  
The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY  
 The National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC  
 Neuberger Museum, State University of New York at Purchase, NY  
 The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC  
 The Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, New York, NY  
 Prudential Life Insurance Corp., Newark, NJ  
 Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham MA  
 Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, MA  
 The Tang Museum, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY  
 United Bank of California, Los Angeles, CA  
 Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA  
 The Walker Hill Art Center, Seoul, Korea  
 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY  
 Wichita Art Museum, Wichita, KA  
 Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, MA

## Selected Museum Exhibitions

### *One Person*

- 2005-06 The Jewish Museum and the Danforth Museum, *Joan Snyder: A Painting Survey, 1969-2004*, New York, NY and Framingham, MA  
 2005 Sawhill Gallery at James Madison University, Harrisburg, VA  
 2002 Muroff Kotler Gallery, Ulster County Community College, *Joan Snyder: In Love with Paint*, Stone Ridge, NY  
 2000 The Philadelphia Museum of Jewish Art, *Kaddish / Requiem*, Philadelphia, PA  
 1998 The Brooklyn Museum of Art, *Joan Snyder: Working in Brooklyn*, Brooklyn, NY  
 1996 The Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, *Joan Snyder: New Works on Paper*, New Brunswick, NJ  
 1994 Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University and The Parrish Art Museum, *Joan Snyder: Painter 1969 to Now*, (selected 'Best Regional Show' by the International Critics Association, 1994), Waltham, MA and Southampton, NY, **Catalogue**  
 1993 Allentown Art Museum, *Joan Snyder: Works with Paper*, curated by Sarah Anne McNear, Allentown, PA, **Catalogue**  
 1988-89 Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum, *Joan Snyder Collects Joan Snyder*, traveling exhibition: Brown University, Providence RI, SUNY Stonybrook, Stonybrook, NY, de Saisset Museum, Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA **Catalogue**  
 1981 Matrix Gallery, Wadsworth Athenaeum, *Resurrection and Studies*, Hartford, CT  
 1979 San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA, traveling exhibition: Grand Rapids Art Museum, Grand Rapids, MI, Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, Anderson Gallery at the Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA **Catalogue**  
 1978 Neuberger Museum, *Joan Snyder: Seven Years of Work*, S.U.N.Y. at Purchase, NY, **Catalogue**  
 1977 Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC

- 1976 Douglass College, Rutgers, The State University, *Joan Snyder*, New Brunswick, NJ  
 Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, Century City, CA, **Catalogue**  
 Portland Center for the Visual Arts, *Joan Snyder Recent Paintings*, Portland, OR  
 Reed College, *Joan Snyder: Works on Paper 1973-75*, Portland, OR
- 1972 Douglass College, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, *Women Artist Series I*, New Brunswick, NJ

### Group

- 2007-2008 *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*, LA MoCA Los Angeles, CA. Exhibition tour: National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, D.C., P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center in Long Island City, NY, and Vancouver Art Gallery in Vancouver, B.C., **Catalogue**
- 2006-2008 *High Times, Hard Times: New York Painting 1967 - 1975*, traveling exhibition organized by Independent Curators International: Weatherspoon Art Museum at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, NC, American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center, Washington, D.C., National Academy Museum, New York, NY., **Catalogue**
- 2007 Geoffrey Yeh Art Gallery, St. John's University, *From the Inside Out: Feminist Art Then and Now*, Jamaica, NY.
- 2005 Mabel Smith Douglass Library, Rutgers University, *Artists On The Edge: Douglass College and the Rutgers MFA*, New Brunswick, NJ, **Catalogue**
- 2004 The Tang Museum, Skidmore College, *About Painting*, Saratoga Springs, NY
- 2002 Guild Hall Museum, *"Personal and Political: The Women's Art Movement, 1969-1975"*, curated by Simon Taylor and Natalie Ng, East Hampton, NY
- 2001 Asheville Museum of Art, *Beyond the Mountains: The Contemporary American Landscape*, curated by Michael Klein, Asheville, NC, traveling exhibition in 2000-2001: Newcomb Art Gallery at Tulane University, New Orleans, LA, Muskegon Museum of Art, Muskegon, MI, Polk Museum of Art, Lakeland, FL, Boise Art Museum, Boise, ID, Fort Wayne Museum of Art, Fort Wayne, IN, Lyman Allen Museum of Art, New London, CT **Catalogue**  
 Dan Galeria, *Underfoot*, curated by Bob Nugent, Saõ Paulo, Brazil, traveling exhibition: Associacao Alumni, Saõ Paulo, Casa Thomas Jefferson, Brasilia, Associacao Brazil America, Recife, Instituto Cultural Brasileiro Norte-Americano, Porto Alegre, Associacao Alumni, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 1999 Parsons School of Design, Aronson Gallery, *Drawing in the Present Tense*, New York, NY, traveling exhibition to Eastern Connecticut State University, Willimantic, CT, **Catalogue**
- 1997 Rider University Gallery, *Abstract Tendencies*, curated by Deborah Rosenthal, Lawrenceville, NJ, **Catalogue**  
 The Newhouse Center for Contemporary Art, *After the Fall: Aspects of Abstract Painting Since 1970*, Snug Harbor, Staten Island, NY  
 Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum, *20/20: CAF Looks Forward and Back*, Santa Barbara, CA  
 The Art Museum at Florida International University, *American Art Today: The Garden*, Miami, FL, **Catalogue**  
 Sleeth Gallery, WV Wesleyan College, *Uncommon Threads: Weaving Narrative and Collaboration*, Prints from Rutgers University, Buckhannon, WV, **Catalogue**
- 1996 The Cincinnati Art Museum, *Making Their Mark: Women Artists Move into the Mainstream 1970-85*, Cincinnati, OH, traveling exhibition: New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA, Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO, The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA  
 Edward Thorp Gallery, *Epitaphs*, New York, NY

- 1995 Rutgers SUNY, *Mary H. Dana, Women Artist Series, 25 Years 1971-1996*, New Brunswick, NJ, **Catalogue**  
 Marsh Art Gallery, University of Richmond, *Repicturing Abstraction*, Richmond, VA, **Catalogue**
- 1994 On Crosby Street, *Isn't It Romantic?*, curated by Michael Walls, New York, NY, **Catalogue**  
 Parrish Art Museum, *Mirrors*, Southampton, NY, **Catalogue**  
 Gibbes Museum of Art and the School of the Arts, College of Charleston, *Painting Self Evident: Evolutions in Abstraction*, Charleston, SC, **Catalogue**
- 1990 Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, *The Image of Abstract Painting in the 80's*, Waltham, MA
- 1987 Corcoran Gallery of Art, *Corcoran Biennial*, Washington, DC  
 Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, *A Graphic Muse*, South Hadley, MA, traveling exhibition: Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, CA, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO
- 1986 The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, *A Contemporary View of Nature*, Ridgefield, CT
- 1985 Stamford Museum and Nature Center, *American Art: American Women*, Stamford, CT
- 1982 Rutgers State Museum, *Rutgers Master of Fine Arts 20th Century Anniversary Exhibition*, Trenton, NJ
- 1981 Museum of Modern Art, *New Works on Paper I*, New York, NY
- 1979 The New Museum, *The 1970's: New American Painting*, New York, NY, traveling exhibition: Belgrade, Budapest, Bucharest, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Rome, Copenhagen, Warsaw, Los Angeles, CA
- 1974 Institute of Contemporary Art, *Joan Snyder/Pat Steir*, Boston, MA, **Catalogue**  
 San Francisco Museum of Art, *The Levi Strauss Collection*, San Francisco, CA
- 1972 Whitney Museum of American Art, *1972 Annual Exhibition: Contemporary American Painting*, New York, NY  
 Fine Arts Center, University of Rhode Island, *Three Artists: Mary Heilmann, Joan Snyder, Pat Steir*, Kingston, RI

## Selected Gallery Exhibitions

### *One Person*

- 2008 Nielsen Gallery, Boston, MA **Catalogue**
- 2007 Betty Cuninghame Gallery, New York, NY
- 2005 Nielsen Gallery, *Two Rivers*, Boston, MA
- 2004 Betty Cuninghame Gallery, *Joan Snyder: Women Make Lists*, New York, NY, **Catalogue**  
 Alexandre Gallery, *Joan Snyder: Works on Paper 1970's and Recent*, New York, NY, **Catalogue**
- 2003 Elena Zang Gallery, *New Work*, Shady, NY
- 2002 Nielsen Gallery, *The Nature of Things*, Boston, MA, **Catalogue**
- 2001 Robert Miller Gallery, *Joan Snyder: Primary Fields*, New York, NY, **Catalogue**  
 Revolution Gallery, *Joan Snyder: Paintings and Works on Paper*, Ferndale, MI
- 2000 Nielsen Gallery, *In Times of Great Disorder*, Boston, MA, **Catalogue**
- 1998 Hirschl & Adler Modern, New York, NY, **Catalogue**
- 1997 Nielsen Gallery, Boston, MA

- 1996 Hirschl & Adler Modern, New York, NY
- 1995 Locks Gallery, *Joan Snyder, New Paintings*, Philadelphia, PA, **Catalogue**
- 1994 Hirschl & Adler Modern, *Joan Snyder: Works With Paper*, New York, NY with selections from an exhibition curated by Sarah Anne McNear at Allentown Art Museum, Allentown, PA  
Nielsen Gallery, Boston, MA
- 1993 Rena Bransten Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 1992 Hirschl & Adler Modern, New York, NY, **Catalogue**
- 1991 Nielsen Gallery, Boston, MA, **Catalogue**  
Ann Jaffe Gallery, Miami Beach, FL
- 1990 Victoria Munroe Gallery, *Monotype Project 1988-1989*, New York, NY  
Hirschl & Adler Modern, New York, NY
- 1989 Compass Rose Gallery, *New Painting*, Chicago, IL
- 1988 Compass Rose Gallery, *Cantatas and Requiems*, Chicago, IL  
Hirschl & Adler Modern, New York, NY, **Catalogue**
- 1986 Nielsen Gallery, Boston, MA
- 1985 Hirschl & Adler Modern, New York, NY, **Catalogue**
- 1983 Nielsen Gallery, Boston, MA
- 1982 Hamilton Gallery, *New Work*, New York, NY
- 1981 Nielsen Gallery, *Works on Paper: Studies for F.M.S.W.N.L.*, Boston, MA
- 1979 Patricia Hamilton Gallery, *New Paintings*, New York, NY
- 1978 Hamilton Gallery, *New Work*, New York, NY
- 1976 Carl Solway Gallery, *Joan Snyder: New Work, 1974-75*, New York, NY
- 1975 Carl Solway Gallery, *New Work, 1974-75*, New York, NY
- 1973 Paley & Lowe, *Paintings*, New York, NY
- 1972 Parker Street 470 Gallery, *Joan Snyder*, Boston, MA
- 1971 Michael Walls Gallery, *Joan Snyder: New Paintings*, San Francisco, CA
- 1970 Paley & Lowe, *Three Paintings*, New York, NY  
Little Gallery, New Brunswick, NJ



### Thirty Years Later

We were in a car on our way to Martin's Creek, Pennsylvania. It was late summer 1979. We had fallen in love with a Joan Snyder painting "Sweet Cathy's Song" recently in a gallery in New York. Joan had just given birth to her daughter Molly and was trying to finish a group of paintings for a show in New York. Nina had expressed how much we admired her work and Joan had reluctantly relented to our visit.

Somehow we found the long rutted entrance into the "farm" Joan shared with Larry Fink, then her husband. Tired after our long six-hour trip from Boston, we were met by Larry who took us inside to meet Joan. Holding her little baby, Joan's first words of greeting were: "why did you come all this way to meet me?"

Now, thirty years later, her "why" has been answered. Since that first meeting, we have presented Joan's work in scores of exhibitions, including nine one-person exhibitions. Our friendship with Joan has expanded like the contours of our shared love and dedication for art. It's eerie, but these last thirty years have passed like no more than a few hours. It is a privilege to have been with Joan as a fellow traveler. Who can resist the promise of something as deep and wide as this winding river?

- Nina Nielsen and John Baker



**Special Thanks from Joan Snyder:**

*I am deeply grateful to Nina and John for their support, in all ways large and small, over the nearly 30 years that we've worked together. Many thanks to Mira Dancy, my wonderful and brilliant assistant. I thank Joshua Buckno for his yeoman's task of not only remaining calm at all times but for pulling together all the bits and pieces for this show and catalog. To Marie Foley, thanks for being there for me, always and ever. And of course I thank Maggie, my beloved partner, who is forever present with support, love, and wisdom.*

This catalogue has been published on the occasion of the exhibition:

**Joan Snyder ...and seeking the sublime**

September 13 - October 18, 2008

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Essay *From Grief to Spring* by Klaus Ottmann © 2008

Photography of artwork by Jack Abraham except

Plates 1 and 3 by Alan Zindman

Plates 6 and 14 by Steven Sloman

Photograph of Joan Snyder by Maggie Cammer, page 39

Design by Nielsen Gallery, Boston, MA

Printing by Kirkwood Printing, Wilmington, MA

**Published in an edition of 750**

ISBN: 978-0-9713548-5-2

LCCN: 2008930019

**Publisher:**

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179 Newbury Street

Boston, MA 02116 USA

617-266-4835

[www.nielsengallery.com](http://www.nielsengallery.com)

Cover: *Sustained*, 2007, oil, acrylic, seeds, glitter, nails, pastel, cloth, paper mâché on linen, 54" x 72"





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