

Skins of Time: Elegies, A Lamentation of Loss and Suffering – Ann Wilson

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Ann Wilson

Image courtesy of the artist

"As though the musicians were not nearly so much playing the little phrase as performing the rites on which it insisted before it would consent to appear, and proceeding to utter the incantations necessary to procure, and to prolong for a few moments, the miracle of its apparition, Swann, who was no more able to see it than if it had belonged to a world of ultra-violet light, and who experienced something like the refreshing sense of a metamorphosis in the momentary blindness with which he was struck as he approached it, Swann felt its presence like that of a protective goddess, a confidante of his love, who, in order to be able to come to him through the cord and to draw him aside to speak to him, had disguised herself in this sweeping cloak of sound. "

--Marcel Proust, *à la Recherche du Temps Perdu*, in reference to the *Vinte Vil Sonata*

Harmony Hammond creates Proustian layers of paint in the evolution of succeeding levels of the present tense. The present in paints' presence, as all painters know, lies in the fact that each layer of paint on each succeeding day presents a sort of personal archeology. Hammond's painting proceeds through specific layers of time conflating the zones of a particular emerging presence in paint. This seems a good place to be, in the context of the surrounding ambience of manufactured war and death. The act of creation in the face of this destructive and all-prevailing milieu presents a counter balance of energy.

Harmony Hammond's exhibition consists of four paintings, each approximately 5 x 10 feet and four monotypes, each 60" x 36". The paintings are horizontally divided in the center by a deep incised line and two dense fields of the consonance of paint layers, which effect simultaneous tones that conform to the harmonic system of the whole work. Each compositional half presents a different but close value dark symmetry. These works are skins of time. "Undertones reflecting up" through light variations on the penetrated surfaces create a state of elusive mass.

The monotypes are vertical rectangles bisected in the center like interior horizons between two close value color zones. They are like sober shaker garb revealing in the thin flow of monotype ink layers some hint of inner ecstasy/outer sobriety in the plain of bisected space. The impact of the press fuses these more liquid flows of color in immediate time with the paper giving them an impression like that of documents from a severe time. The unifying quality of a two-section close value scale creates the feeling of symmetry and balance. The two areas of the vertical rectangles do not stand in front of background color but rather beside or against the neighboring color area. These prints give a sense of balance that has do with symmetry.

Harmony Hammond's paintings and prints satisfy a kinetic sense of balance in their scale and divisions. Layered textured depths allow for a deep swim into "the blood stream of painting". Form is found in the depth division of the center demarcation and the edge defining the two planes of paint values in each work. What to paint? Paint. Cezanne saw the world as mass instead of contour. These works are a question of the makeup of pigment. These paintings project grids of dark, elusive depths that plow layers of time, fields of time hung in balance. "The works in this exhibition do not rely on outside history but rather attempt to bring content into the very surface of paint as material," Harmony Hammond notes.

Hammond adds the oxygen of creative energy in true reliance on fields of personal implication, giving the viewer a balance and pointing like a North Star sighting.

Info: Harmony Hammond's next show will be "Big Paintings 2002-2005" at Center for Contemporary Arts Santa Fe, New Mexico. April 9 through May 21, 2005.