



KENISE BARNES FINE ART
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JANNA WATSON

Statement

Canadian painter Janna Watson uses abstraction as both an escape from and return to the real. As the world we know dematerializes into paint strokes, so too does her paint take stage as its very own character in a multi-act drama of composition. Bundles of color, made up of discrete yet inseparable instances of pigment—what Watson refers to as “moments”—are teeming and poised as though caught mid-multiplication. Sweeps of paint re-direct sharply and fold over themselves; thin, rigid ink lines cut into the pictorial field as rudimentary elements in an increasingly complex system of painterly language. All the components play out on a surface of slow, chromatic gradation. Like many of Watson’s players, these backdrops tenderly gesture toward the familiar, stopping just short of representation. The result is a conceptual project (and distinct, stylistic signature) that speaks to a contemporary milieu in which abstract painting is not the retreat of meaning into an unrecognizable realm, but rather the emergence of medium as a “figure” in its own self-inscribed world of feeling and being. Watson does more than reveal paint’s potential to emote—she gives it a space to reveal itself, in its own time.