



ELIZABETH GOURLAY

STATEMENT

*Let the Sky Soak In*

The paintings in this exhibition, *Let the Sky Soak In*, were all created in the spring and summer of quarantine during the 2020 global pandemic.

I continue my practice of beginning with a color idea or shape idea and switching scale from small works on paper to larger paintings. Beyond that, the work has taken on some changes which I am still trying to comprehend. The shapes I use are found in the things I see in the world from everyday life or in the studio. The shapes are used as is or they are transformed into their essential geometric elements. Minute changes in color, area, edge or orientation can enhance or destroy the emotive response.

Without intending to do so, over time, I create systems in color and shape and line.

My normal quiet routine in the studio has not changed drastically, though my days have more than usual screen time developing and delivering online courses in color and painting and more time walking in and being surrounded by nature. I have observed sky, clouds, leaves, moss, flowers and seasonal changes more closely.

The work has also experienced a slowing down, a meditative repetition of line that reflects a sense of pondering, of marking time, of trying to make sense of the daily news of upheaval and uncertainty around the protests, the pandemic and the existential threat of global warming. A variety of blues and magentas have dominated this work, coming from both nature and my imagination and a more open absorption of color and light. The sky does seem to have soaked in.

When not staring numbly into space or contemplating the fragility of life, I continue to go back and forth between emphasizing the geometry and color in a piece. Influences of architecture, Japanese design intersect with the color research.

One color may appear in my mind and grow up to 6. This goes along with rarely using a large palette within one piece. I minimize the color palette instinctively to reduce variables and eliminate discordance. I may explore a broad range of colors but then reduce it to those I am most invested in.

I am always seeing or thinking about the range of color properties: complimentary or analogous, value, saturation, color harmony or color anomaly.

I am always asking what is making a color alive? Is it size, flatness, relation to edges or how the eye is prepared to see it by seeing other colors in the piece?

It is an ongoing conversation, as one painting often suggests the next to address unresolved ideas or questions. Ideas emerge while engaging in the slow repetition of drawing pencil lines and from the shifting

around or switching out of shapes and painted papers. The accumulations form a collected diary of edge lines and forms, areas of color, akin to the writer's book of accumulated quotations, thoughts and sentence fragments.