



Sally Egbert



Tryptic 1/3
2015
Mixed media on canvas
30 x 24 inches



Tryptic 2/3
2015
Mixed media on canvas
30 x 24 inches

Tryptic 3/3 (Cover)
2015
Mixed media on canvas
30 x 24 inches



Alaska
2014
Mixed media on canvas
60 × 48 inches



Red Roses
2015
Mixed media on canvas
60 × 48 inches



One Flower
2015
Oil on canvas
20 x 24 inches



Three Yellow Flowers
2015
Oil on canvas
20 x 24 inches



Lupines
2015
Oil on canvas
22 x 28 inches



Pink Flowers
2015
Oil on canvas
20 x 24 inches



Four Flowers
2015
Acrylic and oil on canvas
20 x 24 inches

Sally Egbert

by Glenn O'Brien

Art movements appeared gradually and at first they seemed mostly retroactive. Art historians decided that a certain artists shared the same philosophical or technical concerns and declared them a group. It was only with the arrival of modernism that self-conscious art movements arrived and they became somewhat club-like and sometimes militant, spouting manifestos and engaging in battles with other movements and among themselves.

Today art movements are different. They aren't pals drinking, talking philosophy and technique, and fist fighting for ideas. Artists are loners now. Their peers are competitors. Movements still exist of course, but more as marketing tools than as like minded action committees. Movements don't meet. They don't even like each other, but they are convenient. They make the big wheels seem more groundbreaking, they make the rut followers seem onto something.

Art movements are seen as temporary more than ever, at least in their active phase, and this reinforces the idea of progress that had haunted art over the last century or so. A movement was perceived as breaking out because of a few great innovators, a school formed around them, they were hailed as the of the next thing, then an a band of imitators appeared seeming to dilute the breakthroughs of the innovators, and then the inevitable break up, as the next art movements between to gather force, like tropical storms on the radar of the 6pm weather – will it hit hurricane force, will it be a movement, will it be Katrina, will it be a Pop Art, or will it be a major tropical storm like Neo Geo?

I guess we can't do without movements. They are a valuable marketing tool and they give work to curators and art historians, but they aren't

necessarily a boon to artists, who might be better off as a solo act, without being tied to a company of players they may actually have little in common with. But as long as the shock of the new is a factor in calculating importance the movements will stick – sometimes with unfortunate results.

The worst result is that art acquires some of the bad habits of fashion, a terrible fate for artists, and even for collectors who would hope that their collections possess longevity.

I believe that the great art movements, the real art movements, those with profound roots in philosophy don't die, they just get called something else. Fauvism, Dada, Surrealism, Pop Art, Conceptual Art and Abstract Expressionism are all still going strong. Surrealism, Pop and Abstract Expressionism are still incredibly vital, but nobody dares to admit adhering to a movement older than their grandpa. When I look at Sally Egbert's work I can't help but feel that it is a beautiful and original manifestation of abstract expressionism. And why not? Has our collective sensorium evolved radically in the last half century. Do we see differently? Have our instincts evolved since *Meet the Beatles*? Was everything non-objective said and done before most of us were born?

Nope. Absolutely nothing has happened to diminish the power of the best of the first few generations of Abstract Expressionists. The ranks of those practicing this manner of art have certainly thinned, because, of course, abstraction is not new and it doesn't lend itself to explication and the Jackson Pollack Willem de Kooning scene does seem remote and almost quaintly innocent.

It's far easier to sell something that appeals to very current ideas about art that seem to scurry around the floors of the art fairs chasing relevance. But I have to admit that over the last few years, after a full day walking through Art Basel Miami, I have come away thinking, "What did I like the best today." Two years running it was early Alfred Leslie, and then Joan Mitchell, who remains for me one of the great powerhouses of painting. It's not that I'm nostalgic for the fifties, my pre-school years. I believe that it is simply a matter of painting that can be experienced directly, without explanation or defense, painting that moves the emotions without outside intervention.

Sally Egbert would have fit right in with the Elaine de Kooning/ Frank O'Hara, set. When I first visited her studio it was in the Hamptons and I could have easily imagined this lively, twinkly-eyed woman in flip flops and a casual housedress, with paint on her fingers and toes, to have just come from having a couple of beers with Norman Bluhm, Michael Goldberg and Fairfield Porter.

There's nothing retro or old fashioned about Sally Egbert, but there is something old school. She belongs to a universe of artists who live to work, who live in their work. That was the way of the art world once, but of course it still is if you snoop around the network of artist's artists. I think some ghosts of abstract expressionists haunt the dunes and the back roads of the Springs to this day, trying to ignore the obnoxious billionaire crowd that is the new potato blight.

But oddly Egbert and many other abstract painters are not banished to the outerlands. Abstract art is not at the center of the new art, but it is persistent, surprisingly powerful and almost troublingly relevant because of its seeming immunity to the trendiness and fashionability that plague market-driven contemporary art. There is still art that lives outside the institutional zeitgeist. Egbert, like many abstract painters, paints from a personal vision that operates outside the time frames of movements and criticism. Her work isn't retro, it is simply ahistorical and independent. It is what it is, people say today. Little do they know they're quoting Fairfield Porter.

Of all the art movements in recent times, Abstract Expressionism has a unique relationship to history. It places itself outside of history. Abstract art eliminated representation and the object, both of which are key elements in history. In a 1959 manifesto titled *The Psychology of Non-History in Relation to Abstract Art*, the Abex sculptor Philip Pavia wrote "the representational artist and the historian share the same psychological sense-pattern of preferring the ideational experience to the direct experience. The abstract artist, relying only upon direct experience, can discern the negative side of history as one would glimpse the other side of a coin flipped in the air."

Sally Egbert's paintings remind me a bit of Helen Frankenthaler in the ephemeral softness of the color fields she constructs. Her atmospheres are fluid, washes of strong color that seem to respond to invisible influences. They are not immediate strokes but residues and soaks and

stains that evoke the passage of time, an almost naturalistic feeling of flow and an accumulation of happy accident. They also create depths that are familiar, and sometimes a sense that we are moving into those depths; these constructs of imagination don't seem to conform to our shared experience but to a sort of dream physics.

Her flower paintings mix these exotic color atmospheres with a feeling of recent action, flowerlike fractured glyphs seem to have collided, fractured, or magnetically merged. Egbert's fields seem be drifts of midnight fog refracting neon, with headlights or taillight proving movement, or perhaps the abraded walls of Lascaux primed with dyes for ritual images, the foregrounds are given to hard and fast colors colliding and fracturing, or perhaps the opposite, re-assembling forms from a primal memory. As the rearview mirror says rather art historically, "Objects may appear closer..."

These magical tableaux conjure dream states outside of experience and history; they seem to evoke not what has happened, but what will happen – a balance between a state that we have experienced and one that we are moving toward with the attraction of sublime unknowns. There are no histories here, just glimpses of a coin flipped in the air.

Glenn O'Brien is a writer and creative director based in New York City. He is a regular contributor to *ArtForum*. His recent books include the best sellers "How To BE a Man: A Guide To Style and Behavior For The Modern Gentleman" (Rizzoli) and "The Cool School: Writing From America's Hip Underground" (Library of America). O'Brien is currently hosting a talk show on Apple TV's M2M network and working on a book about the changes in the art world over the last 50 years.



White Ribbon
2014
Mixed media on canvas
16 x 20 inches



Landline
2011
Mixed media on canvas
77 x 60 inches

Sally Egbert

Education

1977-1981

State University of New York at New Paltz
Bachelor of Science in Visual Arts,
Emphasis in Painting

Collections

Alex Katz Foundation
Hewitt
Price Waterhouse Cooper
Progressive Insurance
Tucson Museum of Art, Tucson AZ

Awards

2012, Pollock-Krasner Foundation
2012, Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts
2009, Gottlieb Foundation
2003, Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts
2000, Pollock-Krasner Foundation
1998, Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts
1996, Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts
1994, New York Foundation for the Arts
1992, New York State Council on the Arts

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2015, *Places to Be*, Goya Contemporary,
Baltimore, MD
2007, Salomon Contemporary,
East Hampton, NY
2005, *Sally Egbert: New Works*,
Goya Contemporary, Baltimore, MD
2004, Kenise Barnes Fine Art, Larchmont, NY
2004, Goya Contemporary, Baltimore, MD

Selected Group Exhibitions

2015, *Art Am 3*, Galleria Spazio Soncino,
Soncino, Italy
2014, *Material Matters*, Goya Contemporary,
Baltimore, MD
2013, *Silent Partner*, Imogen Holloway Gallery,
Saugerties, NY
2013, *Open Studios 2013*, The Elizabeth
Foundation for the Arts, New York, NY
2013, *The Big Show*, Silas Marder Gallery,
Bridgehampton, NY
2012, *EFA Open Studios*, EFA Studios,
New York, NY
2011, Halsey McKay Gallery, Easthampton, NY
2011, Galleri Spazio Soncino, Soncino, Italy
2011, *Chromesethia*, Tribeca Project Space,
New York, NY
2011, *Baby It's Cold Outside*, Kenise Barnes Fine
Art Larchmont, NY
2010, *Women*, Silas Marder Gallery,
Bridgehampton, NY
2010, *Plank Road*, Salomon Contemporary,
New York, NY
2010, *As You Like It*, Heidi Cho Gallery,
New York, NY
2008, Spanierman Gallery, East Hampton, NY
2007, *East and Artist, Past and Present*,
Telfair Museum of Art, Savannah, GA
2007, *An Electric Eye; Selections from the Dan
Leach Collection*, Tucson Museum of Art,
Tucson, AZ
2007, *Edsel Williams Curates*, The Fireplace
Project, East Hampton, NY
2007, *Women and Abstraction: Then and Now*,
Spanierman Gallery, New York, NY
2006, *The Big Show*, Silas Marder Gallery,
East Hampton NY
2006, Salomon Contemporary, East Hampton NY
2006, *Spaces in Between*, Silas Marder Gallery,
Bridgehampton NY
2004, Lizan Tops, East Hampton, NY
2003, Goya Contemporary, Baltimore, MD
2001, Anita Friedman Fine Art, New York, NY

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Sally Egbert

PLACES TO BE

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