

Natalia Wróbel: Sacred Echoes

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Online Exclusive

Available Artwork: <https://privateviews.artlogic.net/2/ce89421db6d3d0134d342f/>

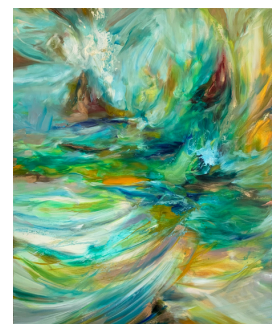
Abigail Ogilvy Gallery is proud to present *Sacred Echoes*, a solo exhibition of paintings by Natalia Wróbel. This exhibition draws from a range of series created by Wróbel since 2017, allowing for a more holistic look into the artist's practice, which incorporates mindfulness practices of deep listening and moving meditation that translate visually into her paintings. Much like the way we absorb the compositional elements of music, Wróbel's paintings offer a synergistic melody when the details come together as a whole. Colors melt seamlessly to harmonize on the canvas, as brushstrokes crescendo across her compositions. Wróbel's studio research also revolves around a fascination with our submolecular reality. She creates paintings that seem to be coming together and breaking apart all at once, mirroring the continual hum of atoms at a submolecular level. Her paintings "tap into the foundational rhythm making up our physical reality."

This collection of works, Wróbel describes, "are largely inspired by the connection between sound and sight. Many pieces were painted by transmuting the sensations and interpretations of certain compositions into the visual field of a painted image. In this way, the paintings offer a visual translation of the immaterial realm of sound and what exists beyond our physical reality." The paintings reference many contemporary composers including Arvo Pärt, Phillip Glass, and Hania Rani among others, as well as the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke, a longtime favorite of the artist.

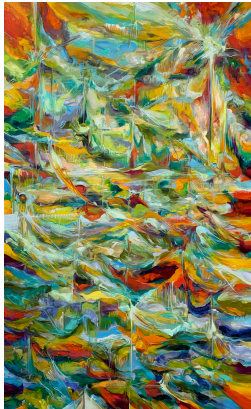


Metamorphosis II is inspired by Phillip Glass' powerful composition, *Metamorphosis II*, which Wrobel listened to throughout the painting process. The mark-making is loose, raw and energetic, which reflects the artist's authentic, natural response to Glass' resonating composition and the reflection on the idea of the "mirage of reality and the sacred sublayer embedded within and around us."

On the Edge of the Known contains a sweeping, joyful abandon in the paint strokes, and is inspired by the idea of the bounty of the natural world, particularly the ocean. For Natalia Wrobel, painting is a form of moving meditation and prayer. This painting is a prime example of the painting process as an act of mindfulness, gratitude, and awe at what exists within and beyond the physical world around us. "I listened to the album 'Inner Oceans' by contemporary composer Karl Prybyloski while painting this piece, and found



a deep connection between his composition entitled “Mermaids” and the movement and energy of this painting.”



Embody Me [Musical component: ‘Divenire’ and ‘Primavera’ by Ludovico Einaudi] follows the impact of phrases from the following Rilke poem, leading Natalia to title the piece “Embody me.” In the final stages of the painting, Wrobel was listening to Italian contemporary composer Ludovico Einaudi, and “felt a deep peace and sense that the process of painting is parallel to healing and transformation, and in this sense, a sacred activity.” This painting has a pronounced articulation of the “sacred scaffolding” that has interested the artist for years, where rectilinear marks complement fluid and gestural paint handling, so the energetic movement in the composition has a place to rest and there is a balance between this duality of chaos and calm, a metaphor for an inherent truth of life.

‘Go to the Limits of Your Longing,’ by Rainer Maria Rilke (from his Book of Hours, I 59)

*God speaks to each of us as he makes us,
then walks with us silently out of the night.*

These are the words we dimly hear:

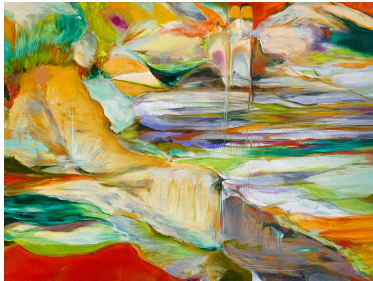
*You, sent out beyond your recall,
go to the limits of your longing.
Embody me.*

*Flare up like a flame
and make big shadows I can move in.*

*Let everything happen to you: beauty and terror.
Just keep going. No feeling is final.
Don’t let yourself lose me.*

*Nearby is the country they call life.
You will know it by its seriousness.*

Give me your hand.



Heaven is a State of Mind is inspired by “an illuminating conversation about being present where you are, and about what spiritually means in this day and age. The color palette and iconography has a two-fold inspiration- partly inspired by a Phoenician glass vase we were gifted from the national museum in Beirut, and also peripherally by the Sea Castle in Sidon, an ancient city in Lebanon. The image of the ancient structure flanking the azure blue of the Mediterranean embedded itself deeply in my subconscious,” Wrobel writes. During the painting process, the artist listened to a set of six songs by two contemporary female Polish composers, Hania Rani and Dobraua Chocer. Their rendition of ‘Nie Pokonasz Milosci’ resonated particularly strongly during the final days of painting this piece and encouraged the loss of a sense of time, space and physical awareness.

Bloem II was painted in Amsterdam as the last painted at Wrobel’s Dutch studio before moving back to the US. Amsterdam encouraged Wrobel’s experimentation with translating the feeling, energy and movement of sound onto canvas. Inspired by Estonian composer Arvo Pärt’s hauntingly beautiful and minimalist composition, ‘Spiegel im Spiegel,’ Wrobel would “watch the park-goers, the trees in different stages of bloom, and would soak in the feeling of biking freely on the wide straight promenade on the west side of the park, my head tipped back to the sky, mesmerized by the tree branch canopy above me.” “Bloem,” which translates to ‘flower’ in Dutch, is an homage to the beautiful botanicals throughout Amsterdam. Wrobel notes that “the movement from one form to the next is reminiscent of the subliminal feeling of the city itself- everything fitting together and flowing in a harmonious, symbiotic relationship.”



Wake II [Musical component: ‘Eden,’ ‘Esja,’ and ‘Sun’ by Hania Rani] is about finding peace and solace in movement and transit. “This idea of movement and stasis has been a recurring theme of my work for the past decade. I am fascinated by the potential to create an image that appears to be at once coming together and breaking apart, especially how this optical illusion can convince your eye that a still image is moving. If you narrow down to the molecular level, everything is in fact moving, vibrating. This painting taps into the foundational rhythm making up our physical reality, inspired by the idea of what it might feel like to be born, of cells clicking together and about inevitable cycles of life.”

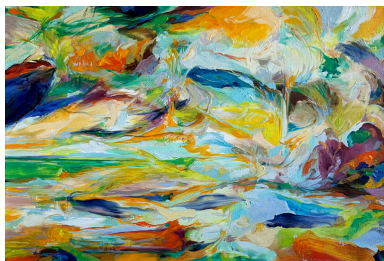
Unfold into Being is inspired by the following Rilke poem from his 'Book of Hours':

*"I'm too alone in the world, yet not alone enough
to make each hour holy.
I'm too small in the world, yet not small enough
to be simply in your presence, like a thing---
just as it is.*

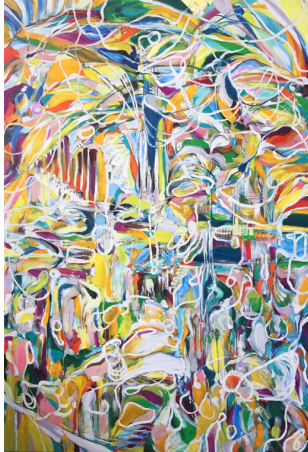
*I want to know my own will
and to move with it.
And I want, in the hushed moments
when the nameless draws near,
to be among the wise ones---
or alone.*

*I want to mirror your immensity.
I want to never be too weak or too old
to bear the heavy, lurching image of you.*

*I want to unfold.
Let no place in me hold itself closed,
for where I am closed, I am false.
I want to stay clear in your sight."*



Days we do not know yet (Dni ktorych nie znamy) is inspired by Polish poetry-rock from the 1960s and 70s. Though most of these songs are characterized by a lilting upbeat melody, they also have a hidden political undertone. This painting is titled after a 1970 song by Polish singer/songwriter, Marek Grechuta. The lyrics impress the importance of living and working towards a better future in the face of oppression. Given Natalia Wrobel's family's personal history resisting oppressive foreign regimes in Poland throughout the 20th century, this song taps into her genetic memory. The piece suggests a dreamscape that can be reached through resilience, hope, and perseverance, and celebrates resisting the status quo, especially in that face of injustice.



Looking with Eyes Closed was created at the beginning of Wrobel's residency in Berlin during the fall of 2017. "I was interested in superimposing architectural forms, references to cell structures and botanical structures on top of one another to play with perception of space. The use of the thick white oil pastel both breaks up the picture plane and creates a cohesive network throughout the composition. My later paintings in Berlin were focused on optical illusions using architectural and geometric tools, and this is a precursor to that series exploration. The colors are bright and along the positive spectrum akin to my 'Portal to Kairos' series, which was a series where I was inspired by images of neural networks of the brain during meditation, and the idea of "whole brain connectivity" where information flows freely, and by botanical structures- this painting is the natural evolution of that body of work."

Dream Weaver III [Musical component: Cream by Claptone] was painted in Amsterdam in Spring 2018 to electronic dance music. "While living in Amsterdam, I focused on the ability to connect sounds to color and form. I see color when I listen to music, and painted the vibrant energy of the music. The painting has a fluid compositional structure but contains a subtle geometric scaffolding embedded throughout the composition that allows the fluid curvilinear movement of the painting to settle. Painting for me is a visual manifestation of what I believe exists beyond our physical senses- in this case, I believe there is a 'sacred scaffolding' that connects everything and everyone- this piece is a vibrant illustration of this idea."

