

Art events

■ **Gallery group exhibition**, through Aug. 2, Ernden Fine Art Gallery, 397 Commercial St., Provincetown. www.ern-den.com. 508-487-6700.

■ **Eastham Painters Guild show and sale**, 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday and Thursday, Eastham Schoolhouse Museum, across from Salt Pond Visitor Center, off Route 6.

■ **Guild of Chatham Painters exhibit and sale**, 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday and Thursday, front lawn, First Congregational Church, Main Street, Chatham.

■ **Featured artist Wendy Prange**, through Thursday, Eastwind Gallery, 34 Main St., Orleans. 508-240-2133. FREE!

■ **"Convergence: Inspiration, Color, Spirit,"** through Aug. 31, Community of Jesus, Rock Harbor, Orleans. 508-247-3194.

■ **Harbor Your Arts Artist Shanties**, daily, Hyannis Harbor/Bismore Park, Ocean Street.

■ **Meet the Artists Marlene Weil and Hollis Fortune**, 2-4 p.m. Friday, The Art Gallery of the Guild of Harwich Artists, 551 Main St., Harwich Port. 508-432-1012.

■ **Reception**, 5-7 p.m. Friday, Cultural Center of Cape Cod, 307 Old Main St., South Yarmouth. Works by Claire Johnson, Orfeo Fabbri, Ellen Babin and Gigi Burboeck. On view through Tuesday. 508-394-7100. FREE!

■ **"Cuts and Corners,"** by Sean Hurley and Alex de-Constant, through Aug. 15, Bowersock Gallery, 373 Commercial St., Provincetown. Reception 7-9 p.m. Friday. 508-487-4994.

■ **Reception for Robert K. Roark "Elegance & Grace,"** 7-10 p.m. Friday, Simie Maryles Gallery, 435 Commercial St., Provincetown. 508-487-7878.

■ **"The Big Picture: Photography Center of Cape Cod,"** Saturday through Sept. 2, Co-tuit Center for the Arts, 4404 Falmouth Road. Reception 5-7:30 p.m. Saturday. Open juried photography exhibit.

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Smart art: "Irene Lipton: New Paintings"

By **ANDRE VAN DER WENDE**
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

When I see the name **Irene Lipton** next to the words "new paintings," I sit up and take notice. Lipton has been quietly plying her brand of poetic abstraction with strong results for long enough to establish a solid reputation for quality work with discreet links back to the storied history of abstraction in Provincetown from Hans Hofmann on down.

Maintaining an active and open dialogue between drawing and painting, Lipton has been working an established vocabulary of repeating linear beanlike forms, couplets, and a lattice of concentric circles over colored backgrounds that make allusions to the figure, and the unique expanse of landscape the Lower Cape offers. She's one of our best abstract painters and her stunning show of new work at the Albert Merola Gallery only makes the case for her stronger.

Characterized by a fierce intelligence and a subtle but pervasive forward momentum, Lipton has always been exploring, quietly pushing ahead within her established parameters. But in this recent body of work, there's a new dynamic ease as she unfurls her dancing, rhythmic contours with the dervish of a haywire slinky. Here the forms have multiplied many times over to a more uniform size; they are a swarming conglomeration of organic shapes that constitute a self-contained world with its own internal logic and reality.

In paintings like "Untitled (12-11)," one of several masterworks in monochrome, a mass of black and bone-white linear forms rise and roll. They cascade over themselves like a billow of smoke or clouds, constantly shifting, moving, changing. There's a restlessness to the painting's nest of forms, as though Lipton's job is to guide and trap them, arrest their movement; which she does within the confines of a dark silhouette shaped like a digestive tract that appears behind them, housing their network of frenzied control. Lipton's still dealing with the figure perhaps but moving from an external to an internal world. The work feels less specific, more universal.

Lipton explains that this more abstract recent body of work was made with the aid of a new brush: the striper, a brush favored by sign-painters and pin-strippers that allows one to control and vary the density of a line with one pull. Created



KEVIN THOMAS

This untitled oil on canvas painting is among the pieces in the "Irene Lipton: New Paintings" exhibit at Albert Merola Gallery in Provincetown.

"In this recent work, there's a new dynamic ease as Irene Lipton unfurls her dancing, rhythmic contours with the dervish of a haywire slinky."

over the winter, the paintings "came about because I needed something like it (the brush)," she says, to help propel her work forward.

Dispensing a distinctive tight edge that's marvelously advantageous to Lip-

ton's curvaceous forms, the brush holds a good amount of paint so she is able to take longer elliptical forays with filagrees of line. They appear voluminous, true and quick, which is interesting because the work was actually painted with a slow hand. The new brush, Lipton explains, "slowed down the line a lot. Instead of moving faster, I tried to slow down."

That accounts for the paintings' direct sense of control and purposefulness. Slowing down appears to have been paradoxically liberating, with Lipton finding the right tool and methodology to go with her intention of active precision. The works certainly don't feel slow; if anything, they feel vibrantly alive, energized with a dynamic spin. It all amounts to what is quite possibly her strongest, most cohesive work to date.

ifyougo: What: "Irene Lipton: New Paintings." When: through Aug. 9. Where: Albert Merola Gallery, 424 Commercial St., Provincetown. Information: 508-487-4424, www.albertmerolagallery.com