



# KINDRED SPIRITS

Exploring Abstract Expressionism Today

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APRIL 1 - MAY 20, 2016

JAY ZERBE  
GALEN CHENEY  
MATTHEW DIBBLE  
KATHERINE AIMONE  
MARGARET GLEW  
STEVEN AIMONE

GREENVILLE  
CENTER FOR  
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ILLUMINATE  
APPRECIATE

# Introduction

The Greenville Center for Creative Arts is delighted to present *Kindred Spirits: Exploring Abstract Expressionism Today*, a national show organized by Katherine Duncan Aimone from Asheville, North Carolina. The exhibition brings in six artists from Canada, Indiana, North Carolina, Ohio, and Vermont. It is only fitting that this show opens in conjunction with the Center's one-year anniversary in May 2016.

Abstract painter Carrie Burns Brown and her life-long friend Randolph (Randy) New Armstrong, the original *kindred spirits* of this Center, planted the seed of a community-driven art center in Greenville and invited others to nurture the idea. With the help of hundreds of volunteer hours and generous contributions, Carrie and Randy's perseverance initiated the Greenville Center for Creative Arts. It is their gift to the next generation.

During our first eight months we hosted more than 5,000 visitors, taught art to more than 250 adults and children, and created six exemplary exhibits. Each show uniquely highlighted artists from our community and beyond. I thank GCCA Founders Pat Kilburg and Becky Johnson, and Exhibition Committee members Judy Verhoeven, Adam Schrimmer, and Kevin Isgett for their dedication and hard work to produce these exhibitions. It is truly a privilege to observe artists walking through the GCCA gallery as they proudly point to their work and share their stories.

On First Friday, we host children as they paint, stitch, glue, draw, and generally make a wonderful mess. It is striking to me that the experience of getting their hands dirty with paint or glue, transforms hesitation into a spirit of eagerness for another try. The kids and adults become *kindred spirits* seeking to experience a burst of creative freedom together!

The idea of a blank canvas is daunting to some, but more often than not it excites the mind and awakens the soul to connect with one's innate creativity. We thank our GGCA Founders Bryant Brown, Allen Armstrong, Don Kilburg, Linda and Earle Furman, and Tracy Hardaway for creating a collaborative venue where dormant creativity can be rediscovered or blossom.

We ask for your support as we enter our second year of stimulating the growth of Greenville's community-driven arts. We will continue to focus on providing exhibitions that showcase the breadth and depth of work produced in our region. We will also continue to educate visitors and students who seek to experience art through classes and interactions with artists working in their studios at the Center. With your generous support, we plan to invest in and develop the next generation of visual artists, art educators, and art lovers. We welcome art lovers from near and far to become *kindred spirits* of ours at GCCA.

—Cherington Love Shucker, Executive Director

# Exploring Abstract Expressionism Today

Abstract Expressionism was a post-World War II movement that happened in New York during the 1940s and 50s, and there are numerous artists that work in abstract expressionistic modes today. This exhibition represents the work of six contemporary painters that have been influenced by this movement of art—the first art movement to put New York City at the center of the Western art world.

Some associate this movement primarily with the works of Jackson Pollock, but there were many artists involved, and they pursued different styles. What bound these artists together was a commitment to working from an emotional source and with universal themes. All were influenced by Surrealism; however, in the aftermath of the trauma of the war, they sought, in part, to express the seriousness of their time. As these young artists succeeded, the spotlight of the art world moved from Paris to New York, setting the stage for America's post-war prominence in the international art scene.

The artists featured in this exhibition reflect reverence for the works from this era. Abstract Expressionism is their artistic heritage. Without this movement, none of us who paint in this mode would likely be doing this type of painting. AbEx artists gifted us that freedom. The large and vital group of painters throughout the world who work in this mode still continue to gain from the philosophical and visual roots of the original movement, while adding their own relevant influences.

This kind of painting can be a joyous and imaginative exploration. But for it to be good painting, its development can take years. The artists in this show are all dedicated to that process, diligently working in their studios to uncover their most authentic work.

Abstract art in general is an internal process rather than outwardly motivated one. Having no particular reference (as does representational art), it can be difficult and challenging work, and there are usually many incarnations and layers in each painter's work.

Since abstract painters begin with no plan, they are in a way akin to improvisational jazz musicians—visual composers that make it up as they go along. They are process-oriented, and each step leads to the next in the work.

Each artist in this show connects in their individual way with Abstract Expressionism—its physicality, style, philosophical nature, and lore. Galen Cheney feels a connection to the unconscious that was a major motivation for the AbEx painters:

*I feel that the grit and vision and courage of the Abstract Expressionists imprinted itself on my artistic DNA. Willem de Kooning, Joan Mitchell, Philip Guston, Lee Krasner, and Franz Kline are my painting heroes. They fearlessly mined their unconscious and lay it all bare on the canvas, facing their fears and blowing things open with powerful and original beauty. This is what I strive for every time I work on a painting.*

Matthew Dibble playfully ponders what it would be like to be friends with these painters in their heyday:

*I've always had a nostalgic fantasy to visit the Cedar Street Tavern in New York around 1950 and have a drink with the "slipping glimpser" (de Kooning), then challenge Jackson Pollock to an arm wrestling contest. Conrad Marca-Relli and Joan Mitchell would be there. I would bum a cigarette from Mark Rothko, and Franz Kline would make sure I got home all right. Knowing they played hard, I would have stayed right with them....*

When Margaret Glew thinks of Abstract Expressionism, she considers process:

*Working on a large scale, as the AbEx artists did, changes everything. It engages your whole body – gestures are larger, more forceful. The scale of a large canvas creates a feeling of working inside the painting rather than observing it from the outside. Paint becomes a language of the body, not just the heads and hand.*

*The act of painting is a process of discovery, and the finished work is a record of our actions and reactions and interactions. Process gives birth to ideas. Freedom, spontaneity, and raw expression are more important than a tidied up finished product.*

Jay Zerbe explains the evolution of his work in relationship to Abstract Expressionism:

*...in the past, my work moved from narrative figuration to abstraction. Over time, I became especially fond of the abstract artists of the 30s and 40s. Already aware of the Abstract Expressionists, I was particularly drawn to the brushwork of Willem de Kooning. The strength and emotional quality of his mark, and the linear delineation of space, captivated me. I spent two years melding his vocabulary, as well as those of other AbEx painters, with Chinese calligraphy. Today that mark-making is completely natural to my hand. My vocabulary owes much to this group of painters.*

Steven Aimone's words reflect the philosophical nature of Abstract Expressionism:

*Abstract Expressionism brought 20th century Modernism to its synthetic crescendo. Modernist challenges to Renaissance assumptions, taken together, brought to light the brand new language of nonobjective ("abstract") art. As a result, painting no longer needed to document appearances or tell stories. Instead, visual arrangements could be about the unseen, the immeasurable, and the indescribable. For the first time, paintings could function purely as experiences to have, rather than things to understand. To the brave and audacious explorers of this language, we are forever in debt.*

My own painting emerges out of a dream-like inner world, that of the subconscious. In the creation of the work, I discover the meaning, beginning simply with a few scrawled marks on canvas. I love the emotive qualities of color, the gesture that comes naturally from my body, and the unrepressed energy and physicality of painting. I rediscover and connect with my calm, reflective, and silent self when I paint. It expresses my spirituality.

We *kindred spirits* sincerely thank the Greenville Center for the Creative Arts for the opportunity afforded us to show our work. We hope that each of you will find inspiration here, possibly leading you to find your own corner in which give birth to your creative dreams.

—Katherine Duncan Aimone, Exhibition Organizer and Curator

## JAY ZERBE Michigan City, Indiana

*The contrast of chaos with order provides the structure for my work. The appearance of order breaks down under scrutiny, which mirrors my understanding of reality. My emotions seek pattern and rationality, while my intellect sees mismatched parts and ambiguous systems. The core of my work revolves around juxtaposing these diverse structures and their uncertain references.*



Jay Zerbe, *unhinderedAccess*, 2016, 30 x 30 x .75 inches, acrylic and crayon on canvas



Jay Zerbe, *flipTheScript*, 2015, 30 x 30 x .75 inches, acrylic and crayon on canvas



Jay Zerbe, *curtainCall*, 2015, 36 x 36 x 1.5 inches, acrylic and crayon on canvas

## GALEN CHENEY Middlesex, Vermont

*I strive for my paintings to exist on a kind of tightrope, right on the edge of coming apart. Not fixed or static, but open... and also with a sense of being composed. I begin each painting with no specific outcome in mind, responding to the changes in the painting in real time. I don't want the struggle of my process to be covered over or tidied up. For instance, I am interested in edges, connections, and intersections of the unexpected, such as the tension that arises at the junction of pretty and ugly, slick and gritty, smooth and rough....*



Galen Cheney, *Rupture/Rapture*, 2014, plaster and oil on two panels, 48 x 64 inches



Galen Cheney, 2012, *Miss New York*, plaster and oil on two panels, 48 x 64 inches



Galen Cheney, *Blue Pulse*, 2014, oil on two panels, 48 x 48 inches

## MATTHEW DIBBLE Cleveland, Ohio

*I have a natural curiosity about my place on earth, and a thirst for sincerity in all forms. These paintings are a glimpse into what happens when my very active inner life and the outer world collide. I approach the work as a tradesman approaches his job...with a watchful attention and a certain confidence that comes from experience, while at the same time searching for something new. How I begin the painting is important to me. If I start with what I know, I usually get the same results. However, I strive to make something with heart and authenticity that emerges out of experimentation and discovery.*



Matthew Dibble, *Sad Ape*, 2015, enamel and paper on birch panel, 48 x 42 inches



Matthew Dibble, *Temple Hum*, 2013, oil, charcoal, canvas and thumbtacks on canvas, 48 x 44 inches



Matthew Dibble, *Flophouse*, 2016, oil on canvas, 74 x 84 inches (diptych)

KATHERINE AIMONE Asheville, North Carolina and Monhegan Island, Maine

*My body of work is about experiencing beauty—that vulnerable state that is accessible each day, but often overlooked in our push to succeed and take care of practical concerns. It is about feeling and sensing in the present moment; I consider it to be the source of my deepest and most authentic voice.*



Katherine Aimone, *The Floating World #13*, 2016, 48 x 36 inches, acrylic on canvas



Katherine Aimone, *The Floating World #2*, 2015, 48 x 72 inches (each panel: 48 x 36 in.), acrylic on canvas



Katherine Aimone, *The Floating World #12*, 2016, 48 x 60 inches (each panel: 48 x 30 in.), acrylic on canvas

## MARGARET GLEW Toronto, Ontario

*I like a painting to have an element of unpredictability. I want to surprise myself. I deliberately try to disrupt the surface, unsettle myself, and provoke new ways of thinking about the work. I am never satisfied. At times the process seems random and arbitrary. Clarity is elusive, as if I am circling around a truth that I can never quite reach. If it resides anywhere, it is in the visceral—in the muck and mess and ordinariness of daily work.*



Margaret Glew, Untitled, 2015, acrylic, oil, spray paint on canvas, 36 x 48 inches



Margaret Glew, Untitled, 2015, acrylic, oil, spray paint on canvas, 48 x 54 inches



Margaret Glew, Untitled, 2016, acrylic, oil, spray paint on canvas, 60 x 60 inches

STEVEN AIMONE Asheville, North Carolina and Monhegan Island, Maine

*My work is visual poetry, speaking indirectly and metaphorically about the human experience. The paintings serve as gateways, affording access to complex, internal states of emotion, psyche, and spirit. They convey a poignant sense of delicacy, fragility, and vulnerability.*



Steven Aimone, *Emergence and Dissipation 2015 #9*, 2015, oil and graphite on paper, 10 x 11 inches



Steven Aimone, *Emergence and Dissipation 2015 #14*, 2015, oil and graphite on paper, 10 x 8 inches



Steven Aimone, *Emergence and Dissipation 2016 #1*, 2016, oil and graphite on paper, 12 x 11 inches

# The Artists

Katherine Aimone; Asheville, North Carolina and Monhegan Island, Maine

Katherine Aimone holds a BA in Studio Painting and an MA in Art History from Florida State University. She worked as a museum curator and director for many years before working in publishing. She currently writes essays for artists through her company *ArtsWrite*, and she writes for *Art New England*. She began painting professionally seven years ago. She had a solo show in Asheville during 2015, and she showed with Steven Aimone in Florida at Fifth Avenue Gallery in 2016. Her paintings were hung at the American Embassy in Moldova from 2010-14 through the Art in Embassies Program. Together with Dr. Nancy Hillis, she teaches workshops called *Doing the Work of Your Life: Moving Beyond Fear in Abstract Art*. She and Steven Aimone own the Carina House on Monhegan Island where they paint and show their work during the summer. For more info visit [www.katherineaimone.com](http://www.katherineaimone.com).

Steven Aimone; Asheville, North Carolina and Monhegan Island, Maine

Born and raised in northern New Jersey, Steven Aimone spent his formative years as an artist in New York City, immersing himself in the offerings of art galleries and museums. He received an MFA in painting and drawing from Brooklyn College, exhibited regularly at First Street Gallery and was represented by Kathryn Markel Fine Arts. Aimone is the author of *Expressive Drawing: A Practical Guide to Freeing the Artist Within* (Sterling Publishing, 2009). A highly-regarded teacher of abstract painting, Aimone actively conducts workshops throughout North America. He and Katherine Aimone own and operate Aimone Art Services, offering workshops and arts writing services ([www.aimoneartservices.com](http://www.aimoneartservices.com)). For more info visit [www.stevenaimone.com](http://www.stevenaimone.com).

Galen Cheney; Montpelier, Vermont

Born in Los Angeles, Galen Cheney now lives and works in rural Vermont. She earned her BA from Mount Holyoke College and her MFA from the Maryland Institute, College of Art. She has been awarded fellowships from The Millay Colony, The Vermont Studio Center, and Da Wang Culture Highland. She received a publication award from Open Studios Press and an exhibition award from Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site. She has been nominated for a Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant in painting. Her work has been collected and shown throughout the United States and abroad, and her most recent exhibitions have been at The Painting Center in New York City; The Kent Museum in Calais, Vermont; and Da Wang Culture Highland in Shenzhen, China. For more info go to [www.galench Cheney.com](http://www.galench Cheney.com).

Matthew Dibble; Cleveland, Ohio

Matthew Dibble is a 1978 Graduate of Cooper School of Art in Cleveland and has been creating oil paintings for 35 years. His energetic, large-scale paintings convey a sense of depth and space expressed through a layering technique in which color, line and shape partner with one another in what has been described as, “top rate craftsmanship and high-risk aesthetic adventurism.” Before unveiling its interactive Gallery One in 2012, the Cleveland Museum of Art filmed Matt demonstrating abstract painting techniques. The resulting video is currently on public view in Gallery One at the Museum. He is represented by Elder Art Gallery in Charlotte, North Carolina; Tregoning & Company in Cleveland, Ohio; and in First Street Gallery in New York. For more info visit [www.dibblepaintings.com](http://www.dibblepaintings.com).

Margaret Glew; Toronto, Ontario

Margaret Glew has exhibited widely in both Canada and the United States. She is represented in Mississauga by Rumi Galleries, and in Kelowna, B.C. by SOPA Gallery. Her work has been exhibited at Art Toronto, Love Art Fair, and Fountain Art Fair in New York City. She is in a number of public and corporate collections, including the City of Toronto Archives, the City of Scarborough Art Collection, and the Richmond Hill Public Library Collection. She has an upcoming solo exhibition at GNSTUDIO Contemporary Art in Oakville, Ontario in May and June of 2016. For more info visit [www.margaretglew.com](http://www.margaretglew.com).

Jay Zerbe; Michigan City, Michigan

Jay Zerbe completed a BA from the American University of Beirut, and an MFA in printmaking from Indiana University in Bloomington. His professional art career began in 1968 in Beirut with several exhibitions. His work was first shown in Chicago in the 1977 Chicago and Vicinity Exhibition at the Art Institute. Jay Zerbe has worked as a graphic designer for PBS and later as a web designer and virtual world designer for IBM. He is now a full-time professional artist. His work has been shown throughout the United States including Atlanta, Chicago, New Orleans, New York, and Santa Fe. He has gallery representation in Michigan in Grand Rapids, Douglas, and Detroit. For more info visit [www.jayzerbe.com](http://www.jayzerbe.com).

