



artist

# CATALOGUE

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION FOR EMERGING ARTISTS



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# MARGARET WITHERS

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK



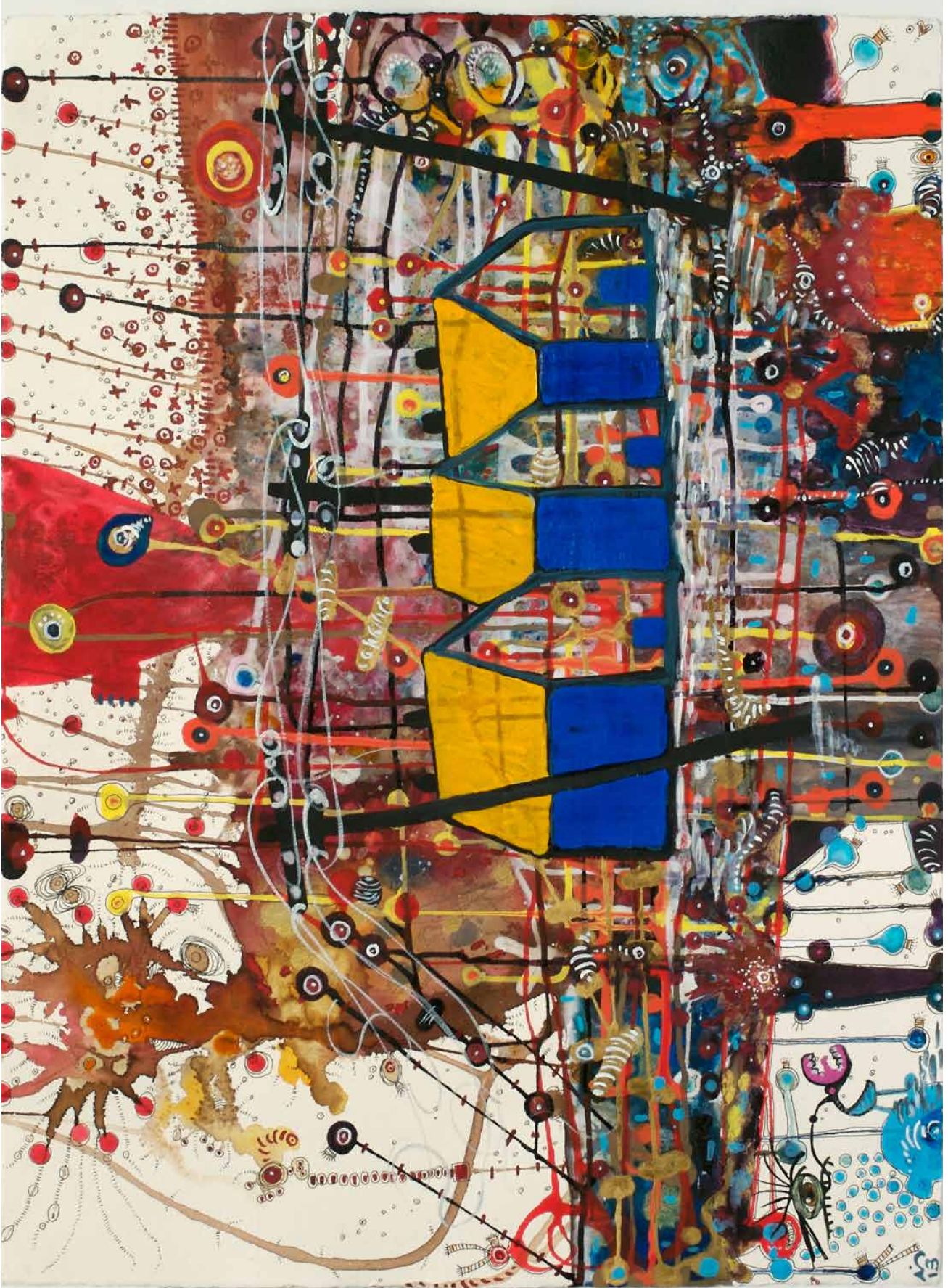
LEFT:  
Cosmic Ruminations Marshaled into  
Minute Particles, 2013  
Flashie Vinyl Paint and Ink on Canvas

FOLLOWING PAGES:  
Black Holes Leaping In and Out of  
Existence, 2013  
Gouache, Vinyl Paint, Ink, Watercolor  
on Paper  
22" x 30.5"

I believe that art making is a primary language that we are born with and is the means by which we communicate our creative impulses. My paintings strive to speak this language to those who are still fluent and to those who might have lost some of the words but still recognize the pitch and flow. My vocabulary originates from personal images that are based on my memories, culture, and experiences, and intrinsically justify their own existence. However, they are not bound by the privacy of my experience, and as a language the symbols I use are fluid and personal to each viewer. I fight daily against the stagnation of ideas and emotions, and I continually strive to grow and expand my practice to be fresh and authentic by utilizing my intuition. I believe that intuition is the height of logic because it forces me to work outside of how I might naturally conceive a given painting based on my beliefs and current mood. As such, my conscious painting process is not impacted by how I frame my daily experience, which allows me to freely explore my creative impulses.

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**In linear Time, My Memory is Clear as Day**, 2013  
2013, 41.5" x 29", Gouache, Flashe, Ink, Watercolor on Paper

**TAC:** In the midst of the abstract colors and marks in your compositions we can also see familiar images of houses, telephone poles, and the patterns of maps. Do you paint from recognizable landscapes or create the spaces on the canvas as you work?

**MW:** When I was young we used to go camping a lot and the kids would ride in the camper and my parents were in the cab of the truck. They were separated from us by heavy glass and they never looked back on us to see how we were doing. We did have walkie-talkies for emergencies, but it seems like their walkie-talkie was always turned off. As a result, it was a microcosm

of a family version of lord of the flies. Being the youngest and weakest, I spent a good deal of each trip locked in the camper's bathroom with a small window to look out of. There is a magic that can come from watching hours of the American West as it passes by a small porthole of a camper while standing on top of a port o potty. It certainly influenced my art. The West is one continuous line of telephone poles dotted with the occasional house. I always wondered what these people did out in the middle of nowhere — did they have kids? Where did they work? Where did the kids go to school? What was their story? When I paint, I'm trying to capture not the look of the American landscape but the memory of what it felt like as a child and what it feels like now.

**TAC:** You speak about working in a way that exercises and explores your creative impulses. Tell us more about your artistic process.

**MW:** I paint on the floor or table and work extensively with the reaction and interaction of the paint mediums. I'm trying to capture a fluid emotional response to nature and to time. I'm also trying to feel my own aliveness. As we get older we tend to emotionally shut down to some degree. This is a safety response to all the constant stimuli around us that leads us to feel that our own aliveness is too much to deal with and needs to be muted. When I paint, I'm exploring a part of myself that is unknown, and this exploration counteracts my natural tendency to block out stimuli. I've found that it's not disengagement that I need when I'm stressed or tired but the opposite — engagement with the world around me is what inspires me.

**TAC:** Many of the works use a bright color palette with vibrantly layered colors. Do you go into each piece with an idea of its color palette or does this evolve as you work?

**MW:** I'm currently working on four different series. When I start a painting it's with the intent to work on one of the series

and I do have a color palette in mind. As a painting exercise, I try to not use certain colors. I do this because I love blues, so a good exercise for me is to paint only in shades of black, white, and grey. I also have a rule to not throw anything away as a failure till after it dries since drying can really change the look of a painting based on the paints' viscosity. I probably throw out about 10 percent of what I start. I don't think I'll ever stop learning — when I feel like I've mastered something I tend to add a new medium to the mix to see how it interacts. For me, this exploration is the fun part of being an artist.

**TAC:** What is next for you as an artist?

**MW:** What I love about painting is the discovery of how art progresses, so I hope to be further along, closer to some truth, and to have my current style tightened and expanded. I'm in a group show this summer at The Drawing Center. The phrase I was invited to respond to is warm: silence, and it's been a lot of fun for me to do a lot of painting exercises in which I puzzle out how to communicate warm: silence. Out of this I've also started working in three-dimensional, paper-fold art, and I have some ideas for small sculptures that I hope to start working on.

