


TOUCHSTONEGALLERY

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December 1 - 30, 2017

WORDS AS MUSE

Maureen Squires

Twenty percent of sales from this exhibit will go to support the Art Therapy program at Children's National Hospital.

Opening Reception: Friday, December 1, 6-8:30pm

Artist Talk: Saturday, December 16, 2 - 4 pm



Many years ago, artist Maureen Squires came across Annie Dillard's award winning *A TINKER AT PILGRIM'S CREEK*. The book is set in southwestern Virginia, outside Roanoke in the Blue Ridge Mountains. However, the artist more easily identified with one of her own favorite places, the Laurel Highlands near Ligonier in her home state of Pennsylvania. Dillard's intense observations of nature, spirituality, writing and the solitude required to immerse oneself in each of them, continue to resonate with artist Squires. Nearly two years ago she came across several quotes from that book which inspired the beginning of a series that primarily feature *Creation* and the concept of *Sailing on Solar Wind* as themes.

The work in this exhibit celebrates the concepts and wordplay of Annie Dillard:

"After the one extravagant gesture of creation in the first place, the universe has continued to deal exclusively in extravagances, flinging intricacies and colossi down eons of emptiness, heaping profusions on profligacies with ever-fresh vigor."

A haunting concept for Squires to envision was the image of *sailing on solar wind*. What would that look like? Would there be sound? How many colors of light, of blue? NASA is now testing solar sail technology and it could be viable as early as 2025, but in the early 1970's, Dillard was contemplating this concept from a more spiritual plane:

"I cannot cause light; the most I can do is try to put myself in the path of its beam. It is possible, in deep space, to sail on solar wind. Light, be it particle or wave, has force: you can rig a giant sail and go. The secret of seeing is to sail on solar wind. Hone and spread your spirit till you yourself are a sail, whetted, translucent, broadside to the merest puff."

In the course of the book, Dillard smoothly transitions from deep space back to Tinker's Creek, itself likened to a book:

"It has always been a happy thought to me that the creek runs on all night, new every minute, whether I wish it or know it or care, as a closed book on a shelf continues to whisper to itself its own inexhaustible tale."

As a calligrapher coming from a painter's background, Maureen Squires' approach to the art of written forms differs from the traditional calligrapher or painter. Words and letters often inspire paintings. The choice of words, thoughts, moods, or colors they invoke can lead to a series of design choices that result in a completed piece at times with letters and at times, without. Appreciating this connection between words and imagery, Squires especially admires authors like Annie Dillard.

Her creative process alters the word images to suit an interpretation or sometimes, reaction to the words. Yet there are other times when the sheer joy of making calligraphic forms becomes a texture in a composition, frequently the focal point.

Please see the gallery's website www.touchstonegallery.com for additional information, or call 202-347-2787.