When I first enter the place where Anna Kunz's paintings hang, my eyes widen, my breath at first quickens and then it slows. The ground of her painting is white. The whiteness makes luminous the pours of color that wash across the field. Her painted world is liquid. The paintings are waiting for me to become the figure in their ground. I am inside the fluid space-- yellow here, green there and a dollop of red. Lift lifted, transparencies overlap making new colors. Rectangles jostle one another, press against one another and then there is space. Are the rectangles marking territories, as seen in an aerial view, or are the rectangles representing bodies, as seen in a mirror? Or both?

Expansion and contraction, a breath in and a breath out.

*Like chess pieces, like phonemes in language, a work has significance, as Lévi-Strauss shows, first by what it is not and what it opposes. Yve-Alain Bois, Painting as Model*

Anna Kunz's paintings are not static, are not representational, are not pictorial, are not abstract. Her paintings have no end. Her paintings live within painting history and are nestled close to Joan Mitchell, Helen Frankenthaler, Agnes Martin, Mary Heilman, and John Cage in a world of gesture, of flow, of contemplation, of play, of chaos, and of chance. Her paintings, on walls or fabric, worn or on stretched canvas, dance with her predecessors. She alters, heightens, and distills their gestures, offering them to us new and raw- not as signs of painting, but as experiences. They are not strategic in the way Alain-Bois describes, because the location within her network of references is always shifting, allowing for fluidity, transparency, multiplicity, and most of all, possibility.
Color pours itself out- stretches itself out, escapes itself...imposes itself upon me as a recall of what is most archaic in me, the fluid...Color resuscitates in me, the whole of anterior life, Luce Irigary (147)

A spill, a drip, a pour, a cascade. What is paint but a suspension of colored pigments in a medium? Oil and water. The gesture made by the flow of pigment becomes the trace of the painter’s body. In the painting “Widening Gyre”, her brush, as extension of the body, drags across the canvas, marking a spiral in cadmium red.

Rectangles of color repeat themselves, in her paintings and in her immersive work, such as her recent installation at the Riverside Art Center, Physical Sunshine. A curved scrim in one gallery space created the wall painting in the other, the one is the trace of the other. I sense this even though there are slight shifts of color in the paint on the wall. I return to the scrim, which is illuminated by a rear window, it undulates. I walk behind and know there is no real front or back, no beginning and no end. Not chronos, but kairos. This quality of deep yet shifting time lives in her paintings, through the play of light, shape and color as the white ground illuminates all. The experience is fresh, not nostalgic and not without meaning. The experience becomes sensual. And what do we come to know when experiencing Anna Kunz's paintings? Can it be put into words and solidified into one concept? No- we only know that our perception is heightened, our understanding of space is changed, what seemed solid is now transparent and what seemed transparent is now solid. Our heart beat quickens from slow to fast again and oh those yellows. Is this a body in which synesthesia lives? How this changes our knowing the world!
Visible and mobile, my body is a thing among things; it is one of them. It is caught in the fabric of the world. Merleau-Ponty, Essays on Painting (124-125)

Eros is implicit in Kunz’s work. Eros is born of Chaos, who, according to Orphic mythology, was born of Chronos (time) and Adrasteia (necessity). Eros was the first god in the Orphic mythological world and the sexual force that enabled creation. Eros creates a psychic relatedness, a desire for relationship and an intense capacity for joy. Anna Kunz has expanded the territory of painting in order to stimulate such sensations with suspended scrims and free standing works often positioned amongst her paintings. I see myself inside her sculptural works. Or rather I feel myself, my body, in the place she has created. My skeleton is made flesh by paint. My arms are raised, draped in translucent colored fabric. I am walking in the space that contains me and I see myself (again) in the paintings on the wall- “Her Mirroring” “Widening Gyre” “Spool of Light” “Gradually Luminous” “Tonight, “ Tread Softy”, “ Submerged”. Relationships are everything here. Jan Verwoert, in his essay “Why is Art Met with Disbelief? It’s Too Much Like Magic”, proposes that rhyme is an “environmental relation between elements with a certain chemistry between them” (96-97). Elements resonate with one another while being somehow alike. Elements are activated into relationship by rhymes’ mimetic quality. “When they work, rhythm and rhyme...constitute...an over all force field within which energies are accumulated and given a particular quality and direction” ( 97). It is in relationship that I become you becomes blue. Blue becomes sky and sky becomes the letter Y. And we cruise around in Anna Kunz’s Yellow Pinto, seeing and feeling the world anew.
Works Cited


