

RANDI RUSSO
DRAWING LINES IN THE SAND

September 25 – October 22, 2021



In a day and age when we feel nostalgic for lost times of innocence, now more than ever, we must take a stand to the changes that are occurring around the globe that rob us from pure joy, love, compassion, and connectedness. Whether it's taking a stand to eliminate COVID (to stop the politicizing of the vaccine), taking a stand to better the world's race relations and secure women's rights, confronting the current climate emergency, and addressing the acrimonious air of the political landscape, *lines must be drawn*.

I must admit, even though all of the issues mentioned above matter *deeply* to me, my work mostly walks through an interior landscape. In my own life, I've learned that I have to 'draw lines in the sand' in order to survive the pressures that come with being an artist, an empath, and a sensitive, reflective person. Creating a "thicker skin" was never appealing to me, so perhaps that's why I turn to art and music to be my protectors.

Drawing Lines in the Sand encapsulates both the reference of making art through, yes, "drawing lines", and of course the idiom many of us use to express when we've had enough. Even the sound of the words, if said one way, could sound full of whimsy, yet when said in another, there is a resoluteness that is far from the whimsical world and very much in the here and now – it is assertiveness at its best.

My paintings toe this line of duality – the gestural and organic meeting up with what is solid and secure. It's the emotion that seeps underneath the waves of my lines that has you pulled in by the undertow of shape on top of shape, drawing you into the whole painting, sometimes just one or two shapes at a time.

This show feels somewhat like a retrospective to me, a "becoming through time" exhibition: you can see where I've come from and see where I'm going with my work. I cannot help but be inspired by artists who have put me under a spell, some of who did so since I was a child. The gestures, structures, and compositions of Willem de Kooning, Lee Krasner, Louise Nevelson, John Chamberlain, and Arshille Gorky (*and so many more*) speak to me. As some of you may have noticed, two of these artists are well-known for their work in sculpture – my fascination with shapes in this tangible way has really had a strong effect on me in my current direction. My abstract paintings have the subconscious hauntings of my influences, but my exploration of the push-pull of foreground/background in the compositions, plus the development of playing with flatness into more 3-dimensional worlds is something I'm carving out on my own.

-- *Randi Russo*

*As always, this show and every other, is dedicated to my mom Marlene Russo and my dear friend David Lang.