

# MICHAEL MULHERN AND LORRIE FREDETTE

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CYNTHIA-REEVES opens an exhibition of work by Michael Mulhern (1940-2012), a painter fully immersed in the tradition of Abstract Expressionism, and the site-based installations of Lorrie Fredette. The show, located at 1315 MASS MoCA Way on the MASS MoCA campus, is ongoing through March 15. The gallery is open winter weekends from 11-5 through March, or by appointment (info@cynthia-reeves.com).

Michael Mulhern was intent on discovering the palette available in the spectrum of black to white, augmented by the special patina of aluminum paint. With this narrow portal into 'color' Mulhern created hundreds of canvases and works on paper, all of which to him read as inquiries into color painting. Critic Karen Wilkin wrote about his paintings: "That they are richly associative is undeniable, but it is their raw, physical 'abstractness' that carries these associations, the nuances of [grey scale] color and surface, the shifts of gesture and line, and the adjustments of interval and density that engage your eye and allow, mysteriously, a wealth of wordless ideas to assert themselves."



Randal Archibold wrote in a New York Times article (April 1, 2002) his observations of Mulhern's intense process, made more so by the artist's proximity to the Trade Towers and their destruction on 9.11. That event affected Mulhern deeply. Mr. Archibold wrote: "He is hunched over the canvas on the floor, dabbing at it with a long brush, looking as if he were fishing something out of a pond with a stick. First come dark swirls of black, and then washes of aluminum gray. The gray billows like clouds masking a jagged nest of black marks. Mulhern...moves around his work, drawing inspiration from somewhere within, fighting the urge to throw away this piece as imperfections taunt his eye. Like so many other [works] he has painted since Sept. 11, this piece is 'busy with information,' a departure from the softer curtains of pale gray that dominated his [prior] works -- the 'Ash' series....work that was in progress when he watched two jetliners demolish the World Trade Center just outside the windows of his loft at 125 Cedar Street. 'The previous work was very quiet,' Mr. Mulhern said during a break at his temporary studio in Long Island City, Queens. 'This is almost severe. I can't believe it is not a response.'"

A native of Paisley, Scotland, Michael Mulhern was based in New York where he maintained a studio for more than 40 years. His career was largely celebrated in his adopted city with groundbreaking exhibitions at The Drawing Center, (1988), Artspace, (1992), and The Painting Center, (1993), among others. A recipient of The National Endowment of the Arts in painting, along with a Pollack-Krasner grant in the late 1980's, Mulhern's exhibitions were featured in The New York Times, The Partisan Review, Art News and Artspeak. The National September 11th Memorial and Museum has acquired two of Mulhern's works as part of their permanent collection; additional museum collections will be announced in 2016.

Lorrie Fredette creates site-specific investigations that examine beauty, harmony and comfort to comprehend the incomprehensible aspects of infection, epidemics and plague. Here, the artist is quite prescient, in finding the ineffable beauty in something seemingly so ominous; and, yet, current medical science is beginning to understand how to use the slightly alter DNA of highly infectious diseases to combat cancer. The modified virus actually prompts the body to attack specific cells, and to strengthen the natural immune system in a very targeted way.

## CYNTHIA-REEVES

The artist writes: “Once I’ve chosen an area of focus, I embark on a rigorous course of research and gather images, which I then alter, vet and reject through an elaborate system designed to completely subvert and distort any likeness to the original source. I am interested in this confluence of science and art, in methodology that thwarts my natural hand and in the contrast between ‘ugly’ origins and sublime outcomes. The use of wax in its natural color as my primary medium is intentional -- the neutral palette emphasizes shape, the aroma can be intoxicating, and the texture is one that invites touch – all in support of my goal to lure viewers into an experience that they would certainly try to avoid had they encountered the original infection.”



Largely inspired by the unconventional and post-minimal working methods of Eva Hesse, (1936 – 1970) whose interest in latex was sought for its pliability and immediacy, Fredette’s choice materials, beeswax and resin, assume a similar role. “I’m drawn to the late artist Eva Hesse’s suggestion that if something is meaningful it might be worth repeating. I’m interested in taking the same form to what I deem the edge and stopping there before it spills over. It’s not possible to think that the making or the telling of the same thing over and over again hasn’t been exaggerated. I see it as a visual folklore.”

Lorrie Fredette received her BFA in sculpture from the Herron School of Art at Indiana University. With recent exhibitions at the Garrison Art Center, Garrison, NY and the Visual Arts Center, Clinton, NJ, Fredette’s installations are well reviewed in the New York Times. Additional international and US-museum exhibitions include: Seton Hall University (South Orange, NJ), Bank of America Headquarters (Charlotte, NC), Mass MoCA (North Adams, MA), Cape Cod Museum of Art (Dennis, MA) and Jyväskylä Art Museum (Jyväskylä, Finland). Fredette recently co-curated Compendium at the Islip Art Museum, an exhibition highlighting the overlapping influences of Science and Art, (ScieArt), a 1960’s avant-garde concept stemming from New York City.

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CYNTHIA-REEVES represents an international roster of established artists who share a process-apparent sensibility in their art. We are committed to artwork that demonstrates an authentic voice, an innovative use of materials, and an appreciation of the mark in diverse media: site-based installation, video, sculpture, painting, and works on paper. A subtext to the gallery’s program is artwork that provokes a discourse around the convergence of art and science, as well as our relationship to the natural world—a discourse essential to the examination of contemporary art and culture within the context of these broader challenges.

The MASS MoCA campus gallery is open winter weekends, Saturday and Sunday, from 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. through March, or by appointment. For more information on the work of Michael Mulhern and Lorrie Fredette, please visit the online gallery at CYNTHIA-REEVES.com, or call 212 714 0044.

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