

LISA ESPENMILLER

Statement

The art I make arises from practices that encourage stillness and a focus on the moment at hand: twice-daily zazen (a form of Zen meditation), the ritual of tea, and the tending of our garden. The lines and washes of color in my paintings and works on paper, visual descriptions of the subtle energy (chi) or breath-energy that flows through all things, seek to sober and quiet the mind. When the mind quiets it becomes susceptible to divine influences, to movement from the microcosmic to the macrocosmic. Whether the body of work is attempting to depict the inner scenery of breath-energy, or the ever-shifting inner and outer landscape (the groundless ground), it all wants to engender a stilling of the hyperactive mind in the viewer.

I work primarily with a square format to emphasize that the paintings and works on paper function both as mirror and window. Viewers are encouraged to stand before each one allowing the piece to offer a reflection of what's inside or a view into another layer of reality.

As in meditation, my process requires that I remain rooted and immersed in the realization of the piece for a focused, uninterrupted period of time. There is little time or space for the logical mind to intervene in an attempt to control the outcome. The pace of each line, the movement of the brush are guided by intuition and "no-mind", accepting and trusting what presents itself in each fluid, changing moment.

I suspect that also being a writer and poet - for years writing words on paper with pen, led to this compulsion to draw line after line after line. I sense these lines are an extension of my poetry, another form of written language imparting the radical message to merge with "the space, the silence, the nothing that supports us." (D.T. Suzuki)