

### Reverie at Lonsdale Gallery

Seemingly different on the surface, artists Katherine Tzu-Lan Mann and Beth James evoke harmony and conversation in Lonsdale Gallery's *Reverie*, an exhibition that explores refractions of dreaming and the way these imaginings translate onto the canvas.



Installation view with Katherine Tzu-Lan Mann, *Topiary* (left) and Beth James, *Untitled (drips: ten thousand lines)*, CMYK 02 (right)

Upon entering the space, varied approaches were immediately visible between Tzu-Lan Mann's and James' works. Tzu-Lan Mann uses methods of intricate layering, creating large canvases that are filled with sundry colours, lines and techniques. The process of growth is present in the way her layers expose the skeleton of what her canvases once were. Tzu-Lan Mann's method involves revisiting her works, modifying each time she re-examines

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them. *Neighbourhood 2*, for example, was a piece finished in 2010, yet it underwent revision eight years later. Here, her changing responses to her immediate environment allow her works to continue to mature, exposing her changing thoughts, emotions and perspectives all while leaving traces of her origins, displaying her trajectory as an artist.



Katherine Tzu-Lan Mann, *Neighbourhood 2*, 2019, acrylic and sumi ink on paper, 44 x 66 in

Citing her body of work as landscape art, Tzu-Lan Mann fuses botanical influences with feminine elements. In *Dripstone*, an abundance of foliage pervades the canvas, creating an almost unrecognizable explosion of petals and vegetation. Using combinations of acrylic and sumi ink on paper, her works are rich and kaleidoscopic with the very history of her works' evolution lending her project life and vivacity.

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Katherine Tzu-Lan Mann, *Dripstone*, 2019, acrylic and sumi ink on paper, 55 x 70 in

While Tzu-Lan Mann focuses on the process of maturity, James concentrates on a singular approach. Behind her practice of linear abstraction is a complex sequence of control and impulse. Beginning from a particular point, James permits her paint to drip freely, producing its own narrative as it moves through the space of the canvas. The product is an elaborately filled breadth of lines that simultaneously overlap and divide one another.



Beth James, *Untitled (drips: curved origin)*, 02, 2019, watercolor, on paper mounted on panel, 72 x 36 in (Installation view)



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Amid a sea of varied stripes, negative white spaces protrude, producing a separate narrative in itself. James exercises her control by putting pigments on her canvas, yet allows her colours to freely move, and perform through their given space.



Beth James, *Untitled (drips: ten thousand lines) 08*, 2019, watercolor, on paper mounted on panel, 48 x 72 in

Superficially diverging in methods, Tzu-Lan Mann's and James' works harmonize more than what's ostensibly evident. While their pieces narrate varied timelines, maturities, and experiences, they correspond in their use of continuity and freedom to construct their pieces. Where Tzu-Lan Mann stimulates the organic process of rethinking and revising, James permits her paint to accomplish this spontaneity. Both artists' seizure of dogmatic feminine elements is also present in the trappings they've used to construct their images. James revises the connotation of watercolour in her work, using its quality of translucence and luminosity to conjure pieces that declare power and control, manifesting in the way her pigments freely move through the canvas. Likewise, the implication of Tzu-Lan Mann's botanical creations rapidly shift from feminine and soft ascriptions to explosive overtones, arousing dominance and resilience.

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Installation view of *Reverie*

True to its theme of imaginings, Katherine Tzu-Lan Mann and Beth James allow their audience to envisage the movement of their dreams and thoughts, permitting us to see, if only for a fleeting moment, how they could possibly appear should they have the inventiveness to materialize and move on their own.

Maria Mendoza Camba

Images are courtesy of Lonsdale Gallery

\*Exhibition information: August 30 – September 27, 2019, Lonsdale Gallery, 410 Spadina Rd. Toronto. Gallery hours: Wed–Sun 11 am – 5 pm.