

# Amelia Currier

## Q & A WITH AMELIA CURRIER AND GALLERY DIRECTOR LAURA MORIARTY

LM: *I love your Blooms series of monotypes, and how they convey the fresh potentiality of opening a new box of crayons. In looking at your work over time, it seems this series represents a transition in terms of how reductive they are. Could you give us some background on the evolution of your work?* AC: My pleasure.

Prior to the Bloom series, my work—despite being encaustic monotype— had more of a traditional etching characteristic: linear and monochromatic. Last summer I was confronted by two events. I was looking into the eyes of a Big Birthday, and the death of my sister-in-law. Consequently, my work was stalled and I was flummoxed. I asked myself what would bring some joy back into my work. I stood in front of the hot box, took a deep breath, chose all the most luxuriant colors and just made simple circles in a grid format. It was an enormous relief to find my bearings again and to also find a new voice.

LM: *The circular forms in this new work seem related to the aesthetic of wabi-sabi with their simplicity, imperfection and irregularity. Is there a spiritual aspect to your artwork?* AC: You nailed it with your wabi-sabi observation. I am very much an admirer of the Japanese aesthetic. While visiting Kyoto I was amazed at how even the garbage has a certain elegance and organization. In my own observation of nature I am interested in the scoured, baked and mangled. Decay and the evidence of the passage of time are important aspects of the wabi-sabi aesthetic.

You can see this manifested in the beading, frothing and flowing of the wax in the Bloom series. I may have a way to illustrate how I place my work spiritually and culturally. In the Jewish tradition, during a Bar Mitzvah, it is customary to pass the Torah scroll from the ark starting with the eldest member of the family, down to the youngest, the Bar Mitzvah. Then he joyously carries it around the sanctuary. This element of the ceremony is in recognition of the belief that all Jews are descendants of Abraham, in a long continuum. I feel this same sense of connection and continuum with the men and women in the Lascaux caves and the Aborigines who created the Songline paintings. How different am I from the woman in the smoky cave? We are both making a mark that will tell the story of our experience in the most articulate way we can. LM: *Can you talk a little bit about your external environment and how it plays into your art?* AC: I live on the outskirts of the High Desert valley in Reno, Nevada. Part of my daily routine is to hike up into the foothills with my dog, Carmella, observe what is around me and clear my head for studio work. Often I will see a surprising color mix in the brush

that begins the process of a new imagery. Much of my pallet is derived from nature. To quote Frank Lloyd Wright, 'I believe in God, only I spell it nature.'LM: *Can you describe your rituals or routines in the studio?*AC: I do have a string of activities that help me get balanced and prepared. The first thing I do is turn on the Hotbox and get Carmella fresh water. Then I put on Leonard Cohen's 'Halleluyah' – a song I never tire of and find humbling and inspirational.If I get 'stuck', I get out the yoga mat and do some stretches. I close my eyes and try to follow David Lynch's meditation mantra: 'don't try to solve creative problems, just empty your mind.' If that doesn't work I take Carmella down to the river and kick at the rocks.LM: *What's on the horizon for your work?*AC: It appears that the circle within a grid has infinite potential. At this point I am experimenting with a more complex Bloom, yet one which remains fresh and alive. The circle or orb as my 'mark' is an ancient, primordial symbol. It was used in both the Lascaux cave and songline paintings, possibly to depict a journey or as a form of measurement. In the case of my prints, the circle is a portal for you to find your own voice and place. Encaustic monotype is particularly suited for expressions of a humanistic nature. Because it is possible to create multiple layers of nuanced color, I believe it can articulate the human voice.

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