

Rebecca Hamm: Underlining Nature

Written by: Steve Thomas

Rebecca Hamm sees the complexities of natural environments and renders a vision that explores mysteries of life. The artwork is inspired through intimate encounters with nature's wonder. Her compositions include a saturated color palette, painterly gestures and bold contours. She skillfully depicts plant, animal, mineral and atmosphere in concert within environments that are saturated with life. Yet, her art suggests that life's mysteries are just below the surface. As a midcareer artist, Rebecca is driven to create compositions that shed light on that which is not easily seen. It is artwork of the visible which invites viewers to search for the unseen—the spirit within.

Her recent artwork is much more than the depiction of the primary elements of nature. She is deconstructing the visible realm through expressions that are intuited, captured and rendered from familiar environments. To varying degrees, Rebecca layers her works with intersecting forms and lines – sometimes through impasto and other-times with pointillist sharpness. These layers are frequently met with further layers—a visual artist's version of call-and-response. She says her new process is all consuming and she frequently loses a sense of time while painting. Rebecca's newer compositions continue to ring true to her greater body of figurative work. One can sense the flora and fauna integrated within a multiplicity of intricate layers, abstract forms and splashes of color. However, it's as if Rebecca is diagramming emotions that relate to hidden structures and intimate encounters within states of the natural environment. Her interpretations of nature are bold abstractions. The visual language is cryptic and may best be viewed with an open mind, a glass of red wine and a selected musical score. George Frideric Handel's orchestral accomplishment, *Water Music*, speaks to iconic interpretations of nature. Even though one never sees, touches, tastes nor smells it, Handel exhibits the nature of water on the Thames, through orchestrated sounds and textures.

To successfully share insight into the inward world of things in nature, one has to be able to articulate that which is beyond the verbal. The inner artist channels painterly expression. Indeed, abstract expressionism is enabling Rebecca to release the spirits from within the immersive micro environments that have always compelled her, offering expression through the fluid medium of paint.

Spirit, then, is distinguished from nature as the abstract form of the concrete, and the things of spirit are identified with the things of the mind—with the world of words and thought-symbols—which are then seen, not as representing the concrete world, but as underlying it.

—Alan W Watts, *"Nature, Man and Woman"*