

An abstract painting featuring a vibrant and textured composition. The background is a mix of bright yellow and white, with large, expressive brushstrokes. Overlaid on this are various colors and shapes: dark blue and black rectangular blocks, pink and red circular forms, and a prominent, thick, light-colored frame-like structure on the right side. The overall style is gestural and expressive, with visible brushwork and a rich palette of colors including yellow, white, blue, black, pink, red, and brown.

JACK MCWHORTER

Jack McWhorter

Crossing the Horizon

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Essay by Johan Teirlinck

THE PAINTING CENTER

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Jack McWhorter is Crossing the Horizon

The concept of one invariable reality is no longer valid since in the 1930s phenomenologists such as Husserl and Heidegger pointed out that reality is subjective, alters in time and space and overall is personal. With this in mind, the modern artist became aware of a new challenge: how to depict a multi-faceted reality that can never be completely perceived by our eyes or by our mind's eye?

Jack McWhorter started years ago on an odyssey, a predatory incursion looking in and through reality, discovering new layers that previously remained undocumented. Indeed, what the eye sees, is only one aspect of things, and often one of the least interesting ones. McWhorter saw the possibility for a painter to look for the reality beyond the visible, opening up the painting as a free space in which new spaces can be evoked, new ways of conveying information can be introduced and alternative methods of seeing one's own universe can be allowed into the final work.

In doing so, McWhorter discovered relations between things, unveiled ancient molecular structures and pathways, leading to secret and fascinating organizations that our mind can imagine but not comprehend. We enter a cosmology that eludes us, we anticipate worlds (inner and upper worlds) that we seem to know, that seem familiar to us, but that do not make sense in a scientific way.

The facts that McWhorter throws at us are not to be used in our daily life as practical insights but are considerations on another platform. They bring us closer to fundamental knowledge that we lost, but which links us suddenly (by seeing these paintings) to our ancestors, to a kind of primitive knowing that we recognize, cherish, but that we cannot integrate in practical things and insights of everyday life.

The spaces that McWhorter shows us are at the same time subconscious references to general knowledge and truth as well as a very personal quest to a higher coherence between all things. In that sense they are at the same time universal and hyper individual.

Over the past decades this effort has been a constant search but his work has altered delicately over the years as insights and time and space have shifted slightly too.

His work highlights a multitude of layers simultaneously and looking at the work one can experience all these layers at a single glance while describing them brings the focus to just one element at a time. This 'gestalt' that we can find in every painting makes it virtually impossible to speak about it without losing the strength of the original painting.

While looking at the paintings, consider the unmistakable importance of 'interconnectedness' of all things and thoughts. The paintings draw parallels, define borders, introduce forms and colors that lean towards each other, or that oppose each other as borders tend to do. Fences or limits, just as knots and traffic in earlier work, refer to relations we find in all living things, in nature, and in all human made instruments or information. It points to our tendency to look for structure in all things. If structure is absent, we provide structure and link things and thoughts with each other. In doing so we reveal our typical human nature: give meaning to the world.

McWhorter is a searcher. Indeed, looking for connections, for links in the visible world with this other world, the world that is inside himself and which he suspects is also in all people. In doing so these depicted worlds connect us, consciously or unconsciously. In his work he is able to show other levels and layers of reality. He is able, through the means of his work, to come close to comprehending the bigger picture. What is it to live? What is it to be in the universe? In time and space?

Thus, the painting becomes 'a map'. In one sense a road map. Where should we go? The work is showing us opportunities in every painting. He invites us to wander in every image he creates. Every painting is a suggestion, a map, drawn by McWhorter. A mental space to visit, to discover, to cherish.

Every painting, every image is 'a somewhere'. It is a location, a place, a space, with corners and squares, dots and fences. It is a 'real virtual' somewhere. It has the qualities of a place: it has a history and stores memories. The more you look at the images, the more they speak to you and release their secrets. The intelligence of the forms and colors tend to appeal to our mind. We will associate every painting with very detailed personal memories and thoughts. Not to find an everlasting truth but to recognize the 'attempt'. The personal effort, made by the artist, but possibly by the beholder, is relevant and tragic. It is an attempt. Futile. But courageous. As the attempt will always remain incomplete.

The poetic effort of McWhorter refers to spaces, that seem houses in some cases, but could be considered to be cities in some other paintings. Why not read them as gardens. Spaces that we can use for spiritual contemplation and rest. Why not understand it as spatial experiments that try to order things around us because we need at least the impression of structure and grip in a chaotic cosmos.

Atmospheric River is such a garden. Nicely balanced between elements that right now are observable and that might slip out of hand soon. There is a map, a certainty, a sign of human life with recognizable patterns on the one hand but there is also the twist and turn of time, disorder and loss of harmony looming in the back. Nothing is to be for ever.

Jack McWhorter helps us to see better. Crossing the Horizon.

- Johan Teirlinck, 2019

Johan Teirlinck teaches literature, philosophy, themes from the arts and culture at the Sint-Lukas Brussels campus of the LUCA School of Arts.

Opposite page: *Atmospheric River*, 2019, Oil on panel, 30 x 22 inches



Contemplating the Zip
2019
Oil on panel
30 x 22 inches



Chinese Gravity
2019
Oil on canvas
48 x 40 inches



Orbis Tertius
2019
Oil on panel
16 x 12 inches



Celestial Chart
2019
Oil on panel
40 x 30 inches



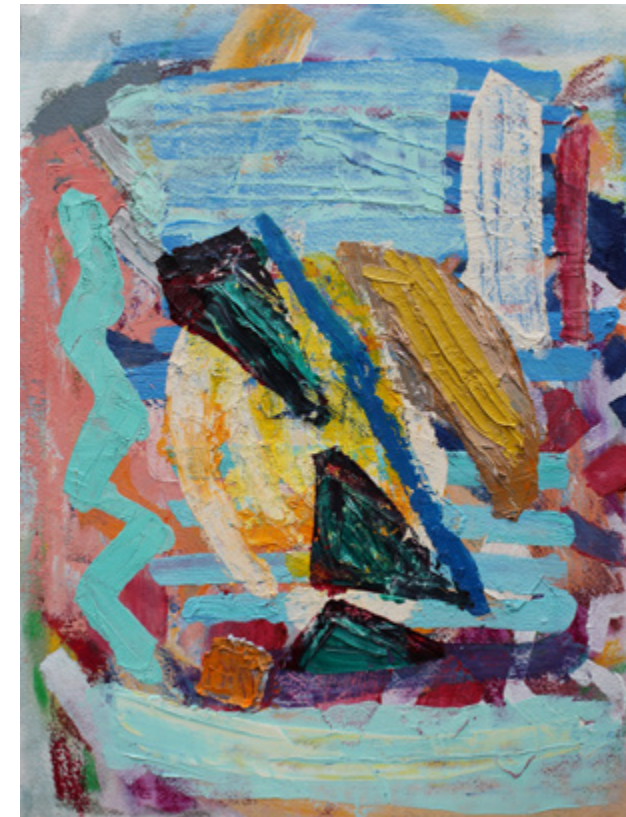
Fossil Forrest
2019
Oil on panel
16 x 12 inches



Triple Planetary Opposition
2019
Oil on panel
30 x 22 inches



Tion Uqbar
2019
Oil on panel
16 x 12 inches



Einstein Cross
2019
Oil on panel
51 x 42.5 inches



Wo Pop
2019
Oil on panel
24 x 18 inches



Jack McWhorter

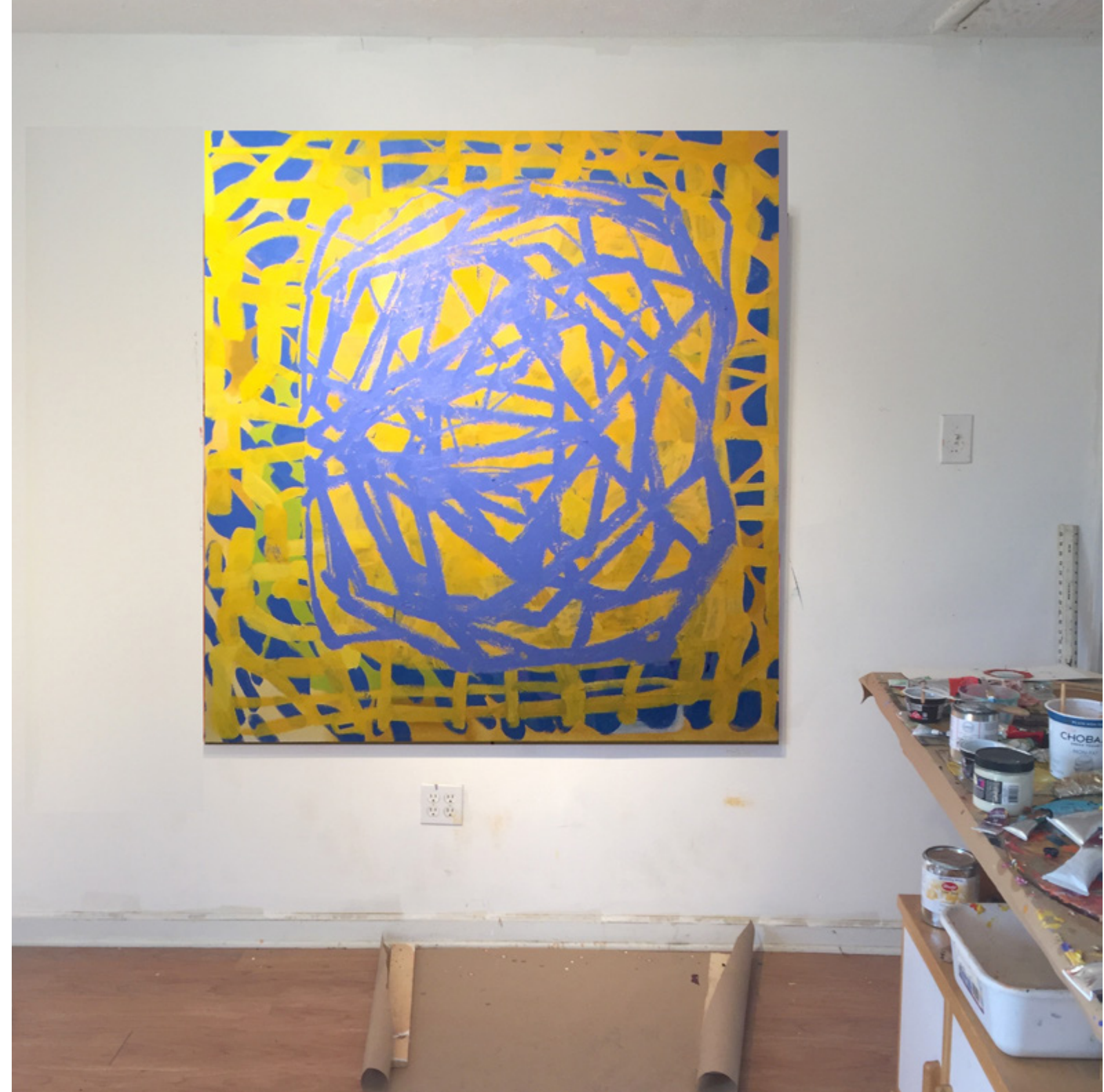
My search within painting is for a connection between something that hovers just below the world of visible matter and systems of recognition and information in our visible material world. The paintings are informed by several open impulses and ideas that radiate the spirit of natural and coded systems. The paintings are developed through layering various languages one upon the other. Maps and charts are mixed together with crystalline structures and cell formations. The record of the intersections and negotiations of each color, mark, and layer of paint sets up moments of conflict in the resulting image. The process brings a strong sense of touch and play into the predicament of describing a world of space and form full of change, conflict, and fleeting evidence.

Jack McWhorter lives and works in Akron, Ohio. He received his MFA from Kent State University in 1983 and attended the Blossom Studio Intensives studying with visiting artists Elmer Bischoff, Janet Fish, Adja Yunkers and Alex Katz. His work has been shown and collected throughout the U.S. and in Belgium. The artist has participated in solo and group exhibitions at Sint Luca School of Art & Design, Brussels, Hebei Normal University, Shijiazhuang, China, The Cleveland Museum of Art, The Painting Center, NY, Jeffrey Leader Gallery, NY, WAH Center, Brooklyn, Sylvia White Gallery, Ventura, Van Der Plas Gallery, NY, The Contemporary Art Center, Cincinnati, Wayne State University, Detroit, among others. Jack has been a visiting artist at St. Luca School of Art, Brussels, The Walworth Barbour American International School in Tel Aviv and for the Ohio Arts Council.

Upcoming exhibitions include BoJu Gallery, VA. and Kunstgalerie Artisjok, Lier, Belgium. For more information, visit, <http://jackmcwhorter.com>.

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Opposite page: Studio View, June 2019



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