

A LARGER SILENCE

Newzones Gallery, Calgary, March 14 to April 25, 2020

When going on a driving trip, I am caught by the excitement and anticipation of flying down the highway, noticing the side routes that offer different directions and different opportunities. I wonder, in another time, in another place, could I take that path?

The visual and the emotional memories are what I bring back to the studio. Shapes and shades of the roads and hills, stripped of detail, honour the pure focus of a painter. Colour, line, texture and composition are the players; the playground is the canvas.

When I begin a painting, I have a vision. As the colour goes down and activates the surface of the canvas, I am open and alert to what happens. I become aware of surprises, combinations bringing about a different result than I expected. I follow those prompts and look carefully as I go. Through the process of prepping the canvas, mixing the colours, and applying the paint, I connect with all the paintings I have done before and all the paintings I hope to paint in the future.

Karen Wilkin once said to me, when looking at photos of my paintings, that I did not wish to banish objects completely - in themselves they have a particular spiritual sound - thus I dissolved them partially. The emotional overtones can then be experienced gradually by the spectator.

The paintings in this exhibition, A Larger Silence, represent an alteration in my palette. Earth tones and subtle contrasts render these canvases quieter than my work done over the past decade. The hills, mountains and roads are silent; they speak only by their presence. As a reaction, the paintings reflect quiet thoughts and contemplation.

My friend Milly Ristvedt, a wonderful abstract painter, told me that artists have a responsibility to explore their own experience of existence and the unknowable. That is what I am trying to do.

Pat Service March 2020