

Wayne State University  
College of Education  
AED 7400 Art Trends

**Review of Art Field Visit:  
Studios of Gilda Snowden, Detroit, Michigan**  
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Thursday, February 17, 2005

On Thursday, February 10, 2005, upon entering the studios of Gilda Snowden, we witnessed an incredible whirlwind of color and commotion on countless canvasses hovering on walls completely surrounding Gilda's working space. From every surface sprang color, strokes and lines, rhythm and movement, and various explorations in formalism infused with emotion. This extraordinary anthology of abstract visions was too overwhelming to take in all at once, or to take in in one evening. Yet much to my own surprise, I was able to muster enough concentration within the immense broadness of her walls to focus on two works, and engage these works sufficiently to extract some understanding.

The first of these is a large painting entitled "Sea of Made and Broken Promises," which was painted as part of a series. It is composed of infinite layers of competing dabs and twirls, dulls and brights, repetitions that come to the brink of misunderstood Nirvana, but slow down just in time to rethink the possibility of certainty. The vision that comes through the painting is perfection infused with hints of imperfection. The strokes are alive. The Red, Green and Black revolutions are alive and kick deliberate holes through their fast paced casual superiors. Love and comfort comes from one thick burgundy stripe, which peeks through thinner pencils and pens. The bold dulls are thuds, like familiar eyes, more ancient sounds that highlight night-ness. Rips of sleepy green illuminations find residences in corners fit for their needs. Behind days of busyness and cluttered forgetfulness I find my sandy yellow

yesterday. I drip my juices to make less meaning out of the meat of heavy guilt and worry. These are the layers of dark rest and sleep-accented shapes. I declare that all spaces and directions track their signatures first through mud, and when they are settled in one lucid amalgam, the visits of color come to tell them of their own demise, and come to draw their faces on them for them.

The second work I visited is a large wall sculpture composed of slender, presumably wooden, shanks of various lengths, fused together to hoist up height, and bound together pointedly with ropes in horizontal loops. The whole mass is of a unified dark, bumpy and greasy exterior, containing within it an unseen interior. Slim slabs of speared unwashable deeds, entwined as one central presence. Two share the skin of encaustic explanations, skin that traps the history of victors and the propaganda of the petty. Two keep together: One long pointed figure stuck on another, a shorter more rectangular pose. Two keep together to understand. Truth is sticky, so all one needs to do is remember it. It will stick with just a little effort, just remember it. This is the skin of its encaustic remembrance, hauntings that high school history books could not hide. A pipe takes its place among them, continuing the upward ascension. We shall remember the ropes and the role they played, for good measure, just in case the truth escapes us abstractly. Black might fade to umber, but sticky is sticky.