



Cry for Peace and Tree Spirit, Mixed media scrolls, 120" x 36", 2012

JANET SLOM

MFA LOW-RESIDENCY 2D

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I paint the figure as a metaphoric living, breathing center that holds and releases dynamic tensions. A figure that erupts like a tornado, swarm, or vortex, where guts, bones, earth and sky all dance together as interchangeable parts of a whole. The act of making allows me to explore my vulnerability; what it means to be alive in the dark of night; what happens when contradictions, ambiguity, and the uncanny come together to hold a center that does not quite hold, but holds enough to call up the fleeting, improbable presence of life.



Creation, Mixed media on vellum, 96" x 108", 2012

“PAINTING IS THE ONE THING THAT HAS ALWAYS FELT NATURAL TO ME. It’s like breathing,” explains artist Janet Slom. From early childhood, Janet, who grew up on a flower farm in South Africa, began trying to capture her stunning surroundings through painting. She quickly developed a passion for expressing herself through dance and art. “Many people told me that being an artist is not an easy path to take. For me, however, it was harder not to follow what I truly love.”

After studying fine art at South Africa’s University of Witwatersrand, Janet embarked on a prolific international career that now spans 40 years and two continents. “There was a turning point when I decided to immerse myself in this one process, and my life has unfolded in the most incredible way,” says Janet, whose work has been exhibited at the United Nations and the South African Parliament.

Part of her journey involved moving to Westport, Connecticut, where she has had her studio for the past 25 years. “Westport is so exquisite, with an energy that is full of creativity. It’s a place that



OPPOSITE: Janet painting a canvas laid out on the floor of her Westport studio.
TOP: Moody and otherworldly, Ocean Essence, 2005.
LEFT: A breathtaking moment of blue Zen, Heaven on Earth Blue 2, 2009.





PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANNA GAMBEL

ARTIST RENDERING

From her studio in Westport, Connecticut artist **Janet Slom** produces **entrancing paintings** that are magical concoctions of ethereal light, layered color, and abstract lines

"I grew up questioning and **EXPLORING** the wonder **OF LIFE** —
ART IS SIMPLY an extension of that."





RIGHT: Monday, 2008 is part of a series of seven paintings about the creation of the universe. **BELOW:** Heaven on Earth IV, 2006 captures the light of dawn. **OPPOSITE:** Janet working on an oversized, 84-inch canvas in her studio in 2009.



embraces writers, artists, and actors,” Janet reveals. Westport often inspires her work, most recently in an ethereal series called Heaven on Earth. The paintings abstractly interpret the moment when sunlight, earth, and sky meet in a stunning gorgeous burst. “Every day I go for an early-morning walk just as the dawn breaks, and the beauty is so overwhelming, it is profound,” says Janet about the series. “It is a reminder that all we really have is this moment.”

The idea of mindfulness and capturing the essence of a given point in time is a recurring theme in her work. In Abbracci, or “hug” in Italian, loosely painted figures embrace passionately or fondly, and for Janet the series is about the beauty of not only being embraced but also embracing the moment. “Whether it’s drawing a model or showing the dance of light on the water, it’s about pondering all of that childlike wonder and gratitude and seeing this very moment because it’s all very fragile and very fleeting. It’s quick.” **LA**

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