

# Mary Ann Kelly



# Mary Ann Kelly: Rivers Remembered—Rivers Imagined

Organized and Presented By:



Paris Gibson Square  
MUSEUM OF ART

September 16 - December 31, 2010  
Reception 5:30 - 7:30pm September 16th  
ArtShare Presentation by Mary Ann Kelly at 6:00pm

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Join Fast, 2006, pastel on paper, 22 x 30"

## Observations

Bob Durden, Curator of Art

Mary Ann Kelly's drawings and paintings ripple between, as she states, "observation, memory and imagination." Her work is a marriage between the modernist concern to create something that is original unto itself and a poetic response to real and imagined places. The work is saturated not only in the formal aspects of art making: color, form and gesture, etc, but also in a realness that confounds/complements nature and what "is" or what is possible.

Having spent time in Japan with her husband, artist, Harold Schlotzhauer and her two children, Henry and May, Kelly has spent years incorporating Asian philosophies, language and artistry into her own visual language and artistic output. What may seem paradoxical in the Western European painting tradition is beautifully at rest and simultaneously in motion in much of her work. Like the cubists of the 1920s, she does not limit herself to the verisimilitude of "real" space in the picture plane. She does not confuse painting visual narratives with literalism. For her, balance comes through examining life, memory and action, and then portraying these observations and interpretations in a manner that creates something new and knowable. Wisdom is implied in her work—the wisdom found in the balance between work and play, family and individuality and philosophy and reason.

When considering a painting such as **Mutual Reinforcement**, 2008, one recognizes immediately that: the forms resemble rocks but the color is not equivocal to the usual river rocks or stones observed in nature; the forms can be perceived both in aerial and frontal view; and the shadows vacillate between graphic invention and what might be perceived in nature. Each of these artistic choices combine to convey a message that goes beyond saying: I saw these rocks and they were interesting so I painted them. Here the visual statement is a more compelling visual metaphor about the strength of relationships where the scale and representation of individual elements relative to the part it plays in the whole is critical, and the artist leaves plenty of room in her presentation for individual observers to interpret her actual intent. Obvious questions raise the bar of understanding Kelly's intent: why are the rocks predomi-

nantly blue? Are these forms truly rocks or are they more accurately organic forms symbolically linked to the artist's narrative? What is the intent of the visual tension that is created through the composition and shifting perspectives in the picture plane?

Chiefly important to understanding this artist's work is a realization that dualities exist on nearly every level: formally, intentionally and conceptually, conveying a true sense of the complexity and beauty of the objects. Her point of view suggests the drama and fleetingness of life while conversely indicating humility and joy. Kelly's emphasis on space, form, color and line reinforces the constant dualities that are present. Compositionally, space is equally confined and infinite. Her view can be equally macroscopic and localized within the same picture plane. As an example, **Confluence of History**, 2008, contains a swirling figure that begins and ends within the picture plane but also rides the compositional edge, surrounded by similar pictorial statements that converge in the picture plane while continuing outside of it to imply a larger idea continuing into space. As is true for many of Kelly's works, the title acts as a guide to interpreting intent and allows the central shape to be viewed both literally and conceptually. The spiral begins within the picture plane and has a linear motion that swirls in on itself to a central point that becomes a dark void, implying it's continuity into the deeper illusionary space. Simultaneously, the composition includes other forms that are both opaque and transparent, revealing and concealing the elements in front or behind them thus building a visual tension while enhancing the intentional message. The result is an artwork that is graphically pleasing and stimulating, restful and active, and charged with symbolic and philosophic content.

Though it will become clear in a chronological viewing of the artists work over the past seven years that the artist has remained committed to a particular rationale, **Rivers Remembered—Rivers Imagined** also demonstrates the artist's development, evolution and resolve in her artistic vision. The Square is pleased to offer this exhibition in its year-long series focusing on a sense of place. As Mary Anne Kelly demonstrates so aptly, "place" is equally real and a state of mind.



Mutual Reinforcement, 2008, pastel, 30 x 22"

## Artist's Statement

Mary Ann Kelly

There is a place in one's consciousness where observation, memory and imagination join to act as a metaphorical explanation for understanding the beauty of the natural world. Our realization of our own significance is put into perspective as we place ourselves into the mix of light and shadow, flow and current, obstacle and pathway. This experience defines our instincts and skills as we choose to control the direction of our journey or allow ourselves to be swept up into the current of experience. It is a reminder of time passing, continuing and folding in upon itself.

There is an element of time found in a moment of high perception and awareness as well as in the reflection on the circular nature of time that we often try to delineate. Reflecting upon the elements of our sensual experiences in moments of awareness or reflecting in the memory of one's collective imagination presents an assemblage of significant signs that form a visual language. This language appears to me as a combination of gesture, movement, color and form that when read together recall the significance of experience, the importance of observation and the power of memory. Water and rocks in their many presentations can separate and divide or connect and bind my imagination with memory and gestures. There is safety in the soft regular pattern and danger in the hidden explosive power. Rivers and rocks are an unending source of color and mood, surface and pattern, profound and ordinary. Reflection occurs not just on the surface but also in a filtering of the elements below the surface. The bringing together of experiences and sensibilities connects awareness to possibility. In that possibility awaits the nurturing of the spirit.



Mary Ann Kelly earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Art Education at the State University College of New York, Buffalo, New York and moved to Bozeman, Montana to study at Montana State University where she earned a Master of Fine Arts degree in Painting. She has received two National Endowment for the Arts awards and a Montana Arts Council Individual Artist Fellowship award. She has exhibited in Camberwell College of Art, the London Institute, United Kingdom; the University of the West of England, Bristol, United Kingdom; Studio 7 Gallery, Honolulu, Hawaii; Gallery Paule Anglim, San Francisco, California; Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida; Boise Municipal Art Museum Boise, Idaho; University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah; and many Montana museums.



Blood in the River, 2008, watercolor and gouache, 22 x 30"



Confluence of History, 2009, Sumi ink, watercolor and gouache, 22 x 30"



Message Beneath the Surface, 2009, pastel, 22 x 30"

## Exhibition Check List

1. **Singular Decision**, 2003, pastel on paper, 30 x 22"
2. **Roundabout**, 2003, pastel on paper, 30 x 22"
3. **Studies from the Smith River: Light Set Aglow**, 2004, pastel on paper, 30 x 22"
4. **Scatterings**, 2004, pastel on paper, 30 x 22"
5. **Lessons from the Smith River: Reading the Lines**, 2004, pastel on paper, 30 x 22"
6. **Long Ago and Right Now**, 2004, pastel on paper, 30 x 22"
7. **Memory Like Light Rain**, 2006, watercolor and gouache, 30 x 22"
8. **Join Fast** 2006, pastel on paper, 22 x 30"
9. **Storm Refuge**, 2007, Sumi ink, watercolor and gouache, 30 x 22"
10. **Masa Beach**, 2007, oil on canvass, 20 x 16"
11. **It is All Connected**, 2007, oil on canvas, 28 x 36"
12. **River Rock**, 2007, pastel on paper, 30 X 22"
13. **All in the Middle**, 2008, pastel on paper, 30 x 22"
14. **Blood in the River**, 2008, watercolor and gouache, 22 x 30"
15. **Message Beneath the Surface**, 2009, pastel on paper, 22 x 30"
16. **Hold Together**, 2008, pastel on paper, 30 x 22"
17. **Pensato**, 2008, pastel on paper, 30 x 22"
18. **Mutual Reinforcement**, 2008, pastel on paper, 30 x 22"
19. **Il Poeta**, 2008, pastel on paper, 30 x 22"
20. **Erosion of Time**, 2008, pastel on paper, 30 x 22"
21. **Reflection**, 2008, watercolor and gouache, 18.5 x 12.125"
22. **Undercurrents**, 2008, watercolor and gouache, 18.5 x 12.125"
23. **Happy Talk**, 2009, pastel on paper, 22 x 30"
24. **Confluence of History**, 2009, Sumi ink, watercolor and gouache, 22 x 30"
25. **Ice Flowers for Hillary**, 2010, pastel on wood panel, 24 x 32"
26. **Shifting Continent—Shifting Rain**, 2010, pastel on wood panel, 32 x 24"
27. **Obi Knot**, 2010, pastel on wood panel, 32 x 24"
28. **Pathway**, 2010, pastel on wood panel, 32 x 24"
29. **An Element of Disorder that Lies Just Beneath the Surface: Runoff**, 2007, Sumi ink, watercolor and gouache, 54" X 108"



Paris Gibson Square  
MUSEUM OF ART

Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art is dedicated to fulfilling the artistic needs of the general public. This is accomplished through:

- \* Fostering accessibility and understanding of modern, contemporary and self-taught art;
- \* Collecting, preserving, exhibiting and interpreting art that actively engages a diverse and growing audience;
- \* Providing educational programming that inspires artistic expression and understanding;
- \* Expanding public knowledge of, interest in and support for the arts and artists of the region; and
- \* Serving as a cultural center, and continuing the preservation of the historically significant Paris Gibson Square building.

- Approved April 29, 2008 by the Board of Trustees

Admission to the museum is free to the public courtesy of

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Tuesday Evenings 7 – 9pm  
Saturdays 12 – 5pm  
Closed Sundays





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