



WAGNER

Alex Gallery 2106 R Street, NW Washington, DC 20008 202/667-2599

With watercolor, ink, and occasional swatches of acrylic, Roberta Wagner gives us images of landscape, places imagined and places remembered.

Compositions without line, the artist uses color to create the impression of real space. Soft washes of color traced with luminescence become the shifting tones of an evening sky, a marsh at dawn, or a prairie.

These feathery intonations create a dynamism in each piece, an unexpected feeling of movement, often punctuated by a vivid counterpoint like the ribbon of orange in *Ariel*, or the light green tufts in *Terrain I*.

Another source of pictorial action comes from this phenomenon: as quickly as the eye perceives a natural scene it dis-

solves the image into its components, into abstraction. Back and forth the piece moves between landscape and paint. This experience is not a disinterested dissection, though. Emotion and a strong sense of mystery (on earth and beyond) pervade Wagner's work.

She says that she wants to trigger, "That moment of encounter and wonder which is the essence of an aesthetic experience." It is to evoke feeling that she paints, not to replicate specific scenes.

Moor, for example, is a deft rendering of marshy ground. The eerie blue-grey form at the center, set off by harder purple squibs, introduces a portentous element, a moody ambiguity, that is unresolved. The endless sky in *North Dakota*, true to the

place, is also a meditation on eternity. And the playfulness of *Ariel* conjures a sense of youth and promise.

Roberta Wagner started painting seriously in 1986, having achieved success in the very different field of banking. Her art is inspired by many sources: from research on transpersonal psychology and intuition to the study of Chinese brushstroke techniques.

In a short time Wagner has achieved great proficiency in her intuitive mastery of watercolor and confident brushwork. These paintings on paper are small marvels.

- Eleanor Kennelly

Eleanor Kennelly writes for *Art & Auction* magazine.

cover:
Terrains I
Water media on paper
26 x 26, 1993



Ariel
Water media on paper
45 x 32, 1993



Awakening
Water media on paper
12 x 9½, 1993



The Lily Pond - Diptych
Water media on paper
44 x 14, 1993



Moor
Water media on paper
25 x 12, 1993



North Dakota
Water media on paper
18½ x 12, 1993



- Alex Gallery
- Galerie Roseg

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