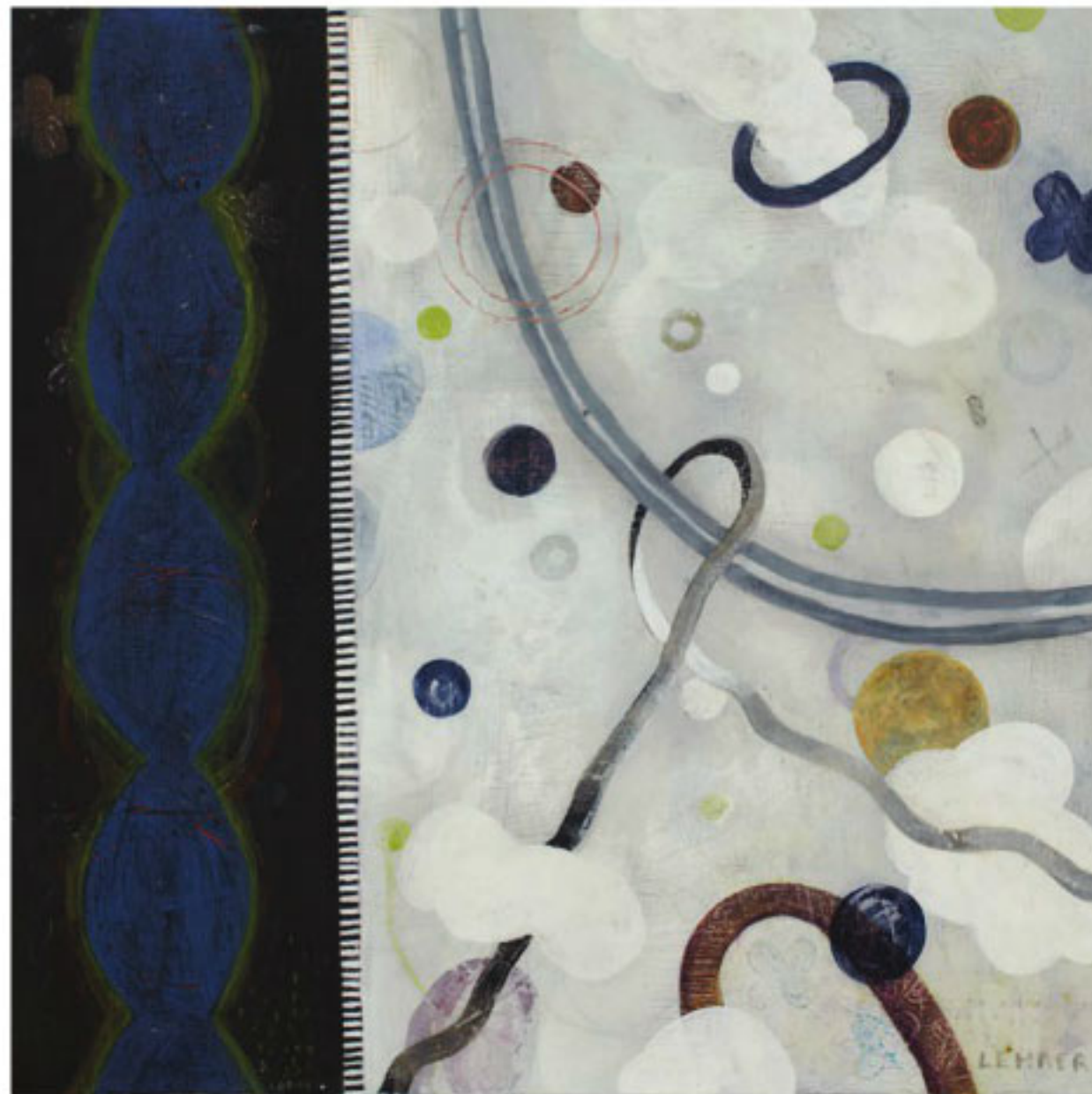


## Artist Profile



Artist Karen Lehrer seated in front of *Untitled1*, 60x72" acrylic on canvas.

# KAREN LEHRER

*This Artist Extraordinaire Continues Her Journey*

BY KATHY BRYANT | PHOTOGRAPHY BY VITA-BELLA PHOTOGRAPHY AND BILL FEDDERSON

A FORMALIST'S SENSE OF AWARENESS, vivid color and strong texture come together in Santa Barbara artist Karen Lehrer's superbly crafted artworks. Inspired early on by an exhibition of works by Lazlo Maholy Nagy and Wassily Kandinsky and by other abstract painters, Lehrer creates works that are intrinsically her own using nature as a guide.

"I am influenced by textures which result from erosion on man-made surfaces. The influence of nature results in natural beauty to me. Examples are painted surfaces which have peeled and eroded, rust, weathered wood and stone surfaces with moss or algae in patterns which only nature can create. Their variety of colors attract me."

Lehrer knew when she was a student in her twenties that she had something to say visually. "I knew that to learn rendering an exact likeness of something in the outer world was a waste of my time. A camera could do a better job. Conceptually, I would call my works 'Thought Forms Floating in Space.' I am a mental person and describing concepts visually and symbolically works for me."

**OPPOSITE, TOP**  
*Duality*  
24 x 24 inches  
Acrylic/Mixed Media  
on Wood Panel

**OPPOSITE, BOTTOM**  
*Hanging Loose*  
20 x 20 inches  
Acrylic/Mixed Media  
on Wood Panel

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Currently Lehrer is painting on a wood surface, instead of canvas. She starts with a base layer by making designs or strokes using acrylic paint with no idea of what will happen. "Most recently I've worked on eight 24" x 24" paintings at a time. It is quite challenging to be constantly reacting to what the previous paint layer was, then putting that painting down and reacting to another." Her paintings are actually six to ten layers when finally complete.

Lehrer embraces challenges like these, reacting to new environments and ideas with delight. Sometimes it is on one of her frequent trips that she finds inspiration for new works. "On a recent trip to Japan I photographed beautifully designed manhole covers. I was intrigued by peeling paint and rust on old structures in rural Japan. On a trip to British Columbia I was influenced by the vibrant colors of starfish in the sea. The energy of a place sticks with me."

And so Lehrer continues on her journey as an artist, investigating both new art techniques and ideas. But her greatest joy is in the reaction she gets from the viewers of her art.

"I want the viewer to enjoy my work and feel comfortable with it," says Lehrer. "I love hearing comments people make about my artwork. Recently there were several people I didn't know visiting my studio and their positive reactions to my paintings were astounding to me. They saw imagery, concepts and ideas that I couldn't have imagined anyone seeing. I love hearing their reactions."

An artist cannot ask for more than that. **CH**

[www.KarenLehrer.com](http://www.KarenLehrer.com)

**TOP**  
*Waterscape*  
24 x 24 inches  
Acrylic/Mixed Media  
on Wood Panel

**BOTTOM**  
*Visioning Sky*  
20 x 20 inches  
Acrylic/Mixed Media  
on Wood Panel

