

## Joost de Jonge



Joost de Jonge is a deeply intuitive painter, a creator of large colorful abstract canvasses, filled with organic, flowing forms that are often responses to his love of classical and modern music. He also looks to his fellow Dutch painters Van Gogh and Mondrian and others for inspiration. While his paintings display intense complementary colors and geometric figures, they also suggest the pitch, harmony, timbre, and rhythm of music.

In his childhood, in the Dutch town of Vianen, began drawing and painting. He explains, "My grandmother also made drawings, and when we sat drawing birds together after a walk in the orchard behind the house, it created a meditative mood, as if by drawing I could make contact with a greater space around me... a different dimension. At times like those, I became aware of my timeless self. That was a very special feeling."

### **The Highest Aesthetic Form of a Picture**

In an essay "Mirrors," he writes, "The highest aesthetic form of a picture results from a total concept that exists inside of the artist's inner self...it is exclusively the inside, the spiritual habitat of the painter's Soul that is reflected onto the picture plane. Like an image in a mirror; the reflection is real, but what you see reflected remains in it's own reality, remains untouchable as such..."

De Jong, for whom the act of painting, of creating a work of art is a meditative and spiritual act, also says, "A theme in the formal, abstract art is not the form as it presents

itself visually, but a pure abstract notion of a form, which can thus be repeated in several forms.”

## **The Ekphrasis Project**

Calling his recent work, “The Ekphrasis Project,” he says that these paintings are inspired by the, “models of composition belonging to the realms of poetry and music.” He explains that the term ekphrasis, “designates a conscious application of the premier aspects of one art in the other,” and that it is different than “synaesthesia.”

(Synaesthesia is a condition in which the stimulation of one sense automatically leads to experiences in a second sense. For example, listening to music can cause the listener to also see colors that are not there.)

With de Jonge, the relationship between music and painting is deliberate. He often uses modules or multiple squares, varying the sequences of forms. He says, “The use of mirroring the chosen forms within the module may very well be considered congruent to aspects of the fugue.” Ekphrasis is known to exist for about 150 years, and is said to have been employed in the music of Modest Mussorgsky and Sergei Rachmaninoff.

## **Composing Himself, Painting Musically**

Los Angeles art critic Peter Frank writes, “Perhaps there is a musician at the heart of every abstract painter; but de Jonge’s whole aesthetic, dependent as it is on dramatic contrasts, exquisite balances, and – in the newer work especially – the orchestration of forms, masses, and shapely and coloristic incidents, would present itself emphatically as musical...(he) fashions his own ekphrasistic paintings and drawings as responses to musical language, musical sensations, musical vision...(he) is composing himself, painting musically rather than painting after music, capturing ekphrasistically no one symphony or sonata or song.”

While artists have been painting abstractly in various modes for more than a century, de Jonge dedicates his central aesthetic purpose to immersing his most personal self in the creative process and merging both with music and spirituality. While related to abstract expressionism, his pieces are characterized by flowing, voluptuous and geometric shapes.

<http://theekphrasisprojectdj.blogspot.nl/>

*Liz Goldner*