

On the 'Road' with Claire Giblin: artist meditates on later stages of life's journey

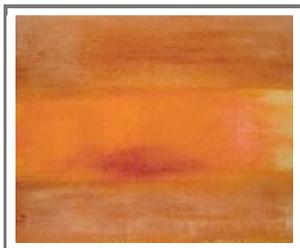
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By LAURA KNOWLES, Correspondent

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"Icy Pond" by Claire Giblin.

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composition. As an educator, she encourages others to find their own meaning in the art. For her, its significance can best be expressed in the words of her friend Crooker, of Fogelsville, when she writes, "How many dusty miles remain? The mountain is silent. All the guidebooks are written in an ancient language we don't understand."

"The Road Narrows"

paintings by Claire Giblin

Opens today. Cont. through Feb. 26

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Keystone Art and Culture Center

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"There is peace that comes with acceptance of the idea that the road narrowing allows the process of aging to become pure and simple," artist Claire Giblin says.

Although Giblin is just over 60, she has become introspective on the meaning of growing older. She realizes that age may bring physical limitations, along with the freedom to live without the inexperience of youth. Where once the road seemed wide and filled with opportunity, Giblin sees a narrower road -- more defined perhaps.

Thus Giblin opens her exhibit of large-scale works of art in "The Road Narrows" at Keystone Art & Culture Center this weekend, honing her trademark style of big, bold color and pensive reflection on life.

For this exhibit, Giblin turns to Asian philosophy and poetry for guidance.

"I was inspired by Barbara Crooker's poem 'Climbing the Jade Mountain,' which is her metaphoric journey of moving to the top of the mountain, evoked with rich colors and textures that are achieved through experimental processes," says Giblin.

The writings of 17th century Zen poet Basho, who wrote "The first task for each artist is to overcome the barbarian ... heart and mind, to become one with nature," also come into play in Giblin's powerful expressions of acceptance that the journey nears its end, while there is great hope for so many more life experiences.

"I feel acceptance and enthusiasm for this part of my life," says Giblin.

And so her art reflects that in unexpected color and vivid brushstrokes. The large scale works of this exhibit are not retiring and timid. "Icy Pond" doesn't look icy at all, appearing more like a softly shimmering sunset in hues of tangerine, pomegranate and peach. "Things Are About to Change" evokes the sense of a storm perhaps about to rock a calm sea on turquoise and marine blue, offset by bold sepia and burnished reds. Her "Mountains" are deep green and warm gold.

With Giblin, it is all about color and the way it speaks to the soul.

The artist was born and educated in New York City and is the recipient of national and regional awards in art, including the 2002 Grumbacher Gold Medallion. She specializes in large-format abstract paintings that are experiments in color, composition and mediums.

She is also the curator for the Phillips Museum of Art at Franklin & Marshall College, where she organizes 14 to 18 exhibits each year in four different spaces. She also oversees the permanent collection and special museum events.

In "The Road Narrows," it is her turn to shine as an exhibitor.

As she points out, abstract art is meant to conjure feelings with color and composition. As an educator, she encourages others to find their own meaning in the art. For her, its significance can best be expressed in the words of her friend Crooker, of Fogelsville, when she writes, "How many dusty miles remain? The mountain is silent. All the guidebooks are written in an ancient language we don't understand."



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