

BETH AMES SWARTZ

A Story for the Eleventh Hour

BETH AMES SWARTZ

A Story for the Eleventh Hour

FEBRUARY 10 - MARCH 19, 1994
E. M. DONAHUE GALLERY
560 BROADWAY NEW YORK, NY 10012 TEL (212) 226-1111 FAX (212) 982-5579

INTRODUCTION

"Only through time time is conquered"

T.S. Eliot ¹

For the last thirty-five years, T.S. Eliot's "The Four Quartets"¹ have been Beth Ames Swartz's favorite poems. Drawing on Eliot's concept of cyclical time, Swartz's exhibition titled *A Story for the Eleventh Hour*, is a new vision, and invitation, for humanity to move to the next level of consciousness. This exhibition of fifteen paintings should be viewed in sequence. They narrate a psychological, spiritual and cosmic journey. They bring to mind a paradox about time. In one sense, time is absolute, but it is also infinite. We have all the time in the world, yet we do not have much time at all.

Today's world is in crisis; it is the "eleventh" hour, time is running out. There are ecological problems, AIDS, world hunger, wars, urban violence, and racial conflicts. Much of the art of the 1980s and early 1990s became a powerful medium communicating contemporary society's anguish through images of degeneration and disorder. Images of destruction became institutionalized within the artworld.

In confronting this dilemma, the spiritual has become political. Unless this self-destruction is stopped, the twelfth hour will approach quickly. Swartz's evocative paintings represent a particular kind of challenge; they offer renewed hope to our human species. Their images are *healing* images.

Swartz's evocative paintings represent a particular kind of challenge; they offer renewed hope to our human species.

It might seem esoteric in today's artworld to use images as a healing process. We may think that this is not part of our culture, but this is wrong. This approach is as old as antiquity. It was Descartes's dualistic view of the mind as a separate entity from the body, that gradually caused Western thinkers to turn away from using images as tools for healing. With the emergence of psychology, interest in the healing power of images was renewed. From the 1920s to the late 1960s, research in psychology was totally dominated by the behaviorists, who declared that psychology should pay no attention to thought, but only deal with measurable physical behavior.² European psychiatrists were able to make use of images, a development that culminated in Carl Jung's research. Jung believed in the unity of mind and body as a life process. He proposed imagery as a vehicle for perceiving and experiencing life. Since Jung, clinical, experimental, and cognitive psychology has formulated an assortment of healing imagery methods that combine Western and Eastern knowledge.³

Swartz's paintings are infused with ideas absorbed from Eastern philosophies, Western metaphysics, and contemporary physics. This merging of East and West is central to Swartz's work and is richly reflected in her paintings, which in their beauty recall the illuminated manuscripts of medieval times. Her inspiring images emit a sense of spiritual harmony. The intensity of the color is reminiscent of stained glass windows and transmits to both mind and eye the need for a spiritual awakening. As an artist, she is ready to reaffirm her faith in humanity.

¹ T.S. Eliot. *Four Quartets*. Harcourt, Brace and Company. New York, 1943:5

² Anderson, Walter Truett. *Reality Isn't What it Used to Be*. Harper & Row. San Francisco, 1992:57

³ Sheikh A. Anees & Sheikh Katharina. Ed., *Eastern and Western Approaches to Healing*. John Wiley & Son. New York, 1989:503

"The soul never thinks without a picture."
Aristotle.⁴

If viewers of *A Story for the Eleventh Hour* are prepared to open their minds and hearts, they will experience the inner message of Swartz's art. Actually, these artworks are not merely metaphorical, for the curved canvases covered with a gold-leaf border give a perception of looking into a window. A recurrent element in all these paintings is the eye of enlightenment, an image of inner vision which may trigger a different state of consciousness.

A Story of the Eleventh Hour starts with the beginning of the universe and the creation of life. It ends with *Shantih shantih shantih* which is the last line of T.S. Eliot's *The Wasteland*.

The seven paintings, 3 through 9, chronicle Swartz's personal story. They move the viewer through the seven chakras and the seven rays,⁵ taking us through seven stages: *Wounding; Childhood; Adulthood; Maturity; Initiation; Integration and Transformation*. These paintings subtitled A Personal Story are part of the overall narrative and invite the audience to go beyond their personal stories to the larger concept of the interdependence of all life.

The intensity of the color is reminiscent of stained glass windows and transmits to both mind and eye the need for a spiritual awakening.

Paintings 10 and 11 (*And the lotos rose quietly, quietly* and *A white light still and moving*) have a balanced composition transmitting a sense of equilibrium. Although peaceful and serene, they convey energy and fluidity. Their message is that humanity can achieve a divine state of release from bodily pain and desire and therefore achieve enlightenment. These paintings are virtually unadorned, in contrast to the preceding canvases' profusion of colors, symbols, and literary references.

In paintings 12 and 13, *The Return: Encountering the Spiral at the Eleventh Hour*, and *The Return: Charging the Species at the Eleventh Hour*, the enlightened Buddha decides to return to humanity and "charge the species" to move forward in time and consciousness to become more compassionate. Paintings 12 and 13 show "time" running out. When we reach *Reconciled among the stars*, (number 14) the entire cosmos is involved and Nirvana has been achieved. Finally, in the last painting in the series, *Shantih shantih shantih*, we are told that enough of us have reached enlightenment for the species to survive. This painting with its inspirational quality transmits joy.

Indigo blue is the dominant color of all the paintings in this exhibition. Its effect is electric and penetrating, but also calming and contemplative. All images, symbols and materials seem to be synthesized and purified by this color.

⁴ Aristotle, cited by Yates. *The Art of Memory*. Routledge & Kegan Paul. London. 1966:32

⁵ "In relation to our solar system, the seven ray energies become the seven builders, the seven sources of life. They are original psychic Entities, imbued with the capacity to express Love and to emerge from subjective Being into objective Becoming." Burnester, Helen S. *The Seven Rays Made Visual*. DeVorss & Co. California. 1986:102.

*"To us, art is an adventure into an unknown world,
which can be explored only by those willing to take the risk."
Mark Rothko and Adolph Gottlieb.⁶*

Swartz is a courageous artist, willing to take many risks. For many years, she has been involved with this concept of art as a healing process; this was reinforced by her studies in philosophy, metaphysics and meditation. *A Story for the Eleventh Hour* is yet another step in her explorations.

In the 1970s, Swartz developed a unique process/ritual by consistently using fire and earth to enhance the message that creating beauty out of destruction is a metaphor for life's vicissitudes. Her *Fire Works*, incorporating natural elements like sunlight, sand, fire and earth received much critical acclaim. She continued to work in this vein until 1983. In the 1980s, Swartz produced a major installation titled *A Moving Point of Balance* which toured the United States extensively. It was a multi-sensory installation consisting of 7' x 7' paintings representing the seven chakras. She used microglitter, gold leaf, broken glass and crystals in these panels. In a darkened environment, music and color-light baths conveyed a calming message. This participatory environment was highly effective. Viewers entered a womb-like darkened space, then walked through seven sequential baths of colored light, each corresponding to the seven chakras or energy centers of the body. The six-year tour resulted in a study that revealed that a large majority of participants were uplifted after experiencing the installation.⁷

*Swartz is a talented collagist who
manages to endow the texture and
surfaces of her paintings with
brilliance and poetic fervor.*

Conceptually, Swartz pays homage to different influences ranging from cave paintings to William Blake to Mark Rothko. Swartz conceived *A Moving Point of Balance* after being deeply moved by the Rothko chapel in Houston. As with Rothko's paintings, her images are meant to slow down the process of viewing and create a charged physical and spiritual ambience that may actually vibrate around the viewer like a sacred chant.⁸ In some ways, Swartz is also connected spiritually to Duchamp, although her art has her own distinctive approach. We can imply, in both cases, that the artist can be an innovator, as well as a visionary.

Swartz is a talented collagist who manages to endow the texture and surfaces of her paintings with brilliance and poetic fervor. The unusual juxtaposition of materials encountered in her canvases are innovative. Sliced geodes, cutouts and photocopy collages enriched visually by gold-leaf borders assail the senses. She has taken the collage tradition of Picasso, Schwitters and Rauschenberg to a different, more sensuous level.

6 This quote belongs to a statement by Rothko and Gottlieb written in response to remarks by the *New York Times* art critic Edward Alden Jewell on their paintings exhibited in the Federation of Modern Painters and Sculptors held in New York City at Wildenstein Gallery, June 1943. The statement was published in Mr. Jewell's column on 13 June, 1943. Cited by Herschel B. Chipp. *Theories of Modern Art*. University of California Press. Los Angeles. 1986:544

7 Research study of *A Moving Point of Balance* comprising 4,468 respondents. 92% were more relaxed after viewing the exhibition. Phrases and words they used to describe their reactions included: "inspired," "serene," "totally immersed," "awed" and "transported."

8 See Jack Flam. *The Agonies of Success*. Book review of Mark Rothko's biography by James E.B. Breslin. *New York Review of Books*. Vol. XL, 20. December 1993. 36-39

In her paintings, Swartz connects earth and sky, mind and body, individual and collective. Full of harmony and radiance, an inner beauty if you will, these paintings inspire both contemplation and action. Swartz, is what Carl Jung termed a “gnostic intermediary”, that is, she is able to translate and express her experience into the language of universality.⁹

As a transformative artist,¹⁰ Swartz is a leader and a shaman inviting us to renew ourselves and to be reborn. Will we accept her invitation? Will we open our inner self to spiritual growth? She is inviting us to listen to a new story for our planet and to develop a new consciousness.

Can art be an agent of change? The question needs to be asked. The answer may be elusive. Swartz is creating a new mythology to give us hope and to regain faith. Do we need a new symbolism? Do we need to create new rites? Have we lost our innocence, because our civilization has become so materialistic and complex? Let this wise artist tell her story. Beth Ames Swartz, painter and visionary, brings back the magic and mystery to art and into our lives.

Berta Sichel

Berta Sichel is a writer and independent curator living in New York City.

⁹ Sheikh A. Anees & Sheikh Katharina. Ed., **Eastern and Western Approaches to Healing**. John Wiley & Son. New York. 1989:491

¹⁰ In 1988, Swartz co-founded International Friends of Transformative Art, a non-profit organization for positive global change. The following definition was written by John Perreault, member of the Board of Advisors and David Floria, the first Executive Director of IFTA.

“Transformative art is any visual or performing art that expresses or evokes spiritual truth or higher states of consciousness, that lead to a greater understanding of oneself, humanity and nature, the cosmos and their interdependence.”

A Story for the Eleventh Hour

PAINTING BACKGROUND

The creative and personal lives of Beth Ames Swartz demonstrate her belief in the transforming potential of positive human values in the life of artist and viewer alike.

Wounded in her life (just as each of us bear our individual wounds), she makes of art and life a conscious journey toward greater self-realization with faith in finding happiness in the here-and-now. Swartz is teacher and student, a spiritual searcher and living creator who values all that is human.

Her original interest in painting, in intimate involvement with natural wonder grew into a larger concern for ecological healing. Early on, Swartz produced a body of art collectively known as *Fire Works*; these works used fire as part of a phoenix-like process of creation with new art arising through the transforming power of destruction. Conceptually, the current for the creative spark from which the *Fire Works* spring flows from Hindu philosophy, a system that considers destruction and reproduction one entity, a fused totality. With hindsight, the purifying aspect of fire helped begin healing Swartz in a manner analogous to its intended use by Brahman priests.

Perhaps her most significant work prior to this show is a group of seven paintings entitled *A Moving Point of Balance*, a controlled installation using sound and light to create a spiritual environment deeply moving to its many viewers as it traveled the country. This presentation spoke to those struggling to find their focus, their point of quietude.

The title to the last group show in which her work appeared came from her life: *The Wounded Healer*, a title that emphasizes her belief in the transforming power of life and art, yet a title that recapitulates her wound suggesting, perhaps, that (then) she still had not healed fully.

Now, Swartz finds peace by giving of herself. She moves beyond the wound, beyond herself into a larger narrative.

A Story for the Eleventh Hour conveys the magic which artists always find when they reach their mature center, that still point from which the work speaks with a silent authority demonstrating by its very existence that hope is possible and that we, the viewer, also may find peace.

A Story for the Eleventh Hour consists of a group of fifteen paintings each of which is part of a visual narrative, part of a totality that is greater than the sum of the parts. The artist paints a symbolic mantra, that is, a figurative group of archetypal images that invite the viewer to look into themselves and find their way.

MAIN THEMES

Synthesizing themes visualized in *A Story for the Eleventh Hour* yields four main areas of interest.

1. A Biological and Spiritual Journey of Self
The "I – Eye – Aye" (Three Eyes)
 - The "I" of ego
 - The "eye" of seeing
 - The "aye" of affirmation



Beginning mixed media on canvas 39½" x 30"
PLATE I

A journey of the ego from the smaller story (the “I” of ego) into the larger story (the “aye” of affirmation), a journey that asks for a giving up of self in exchange for a belief in others, both as individual beings and, collectively, as humankind. In order to make this heroine’s journey, each person should sacrifice their childlike ego by “seeing” into themselves.

Consider viewing the giving up of ego as a type of dying, a fourth type of “I-eye-aye.”

The seven paintings that constitute *A Personal Story* are a subset of the exhibition. Each one of these seven paintings visualizes a phase of development in the life of a person. Each work in the subset contains elements common to one life, yet each phase of development possesses symbols unique to that stage of being.

Swartz paints a journey of self that issues an invitation to each person to look into her or his life in order to change, to grow and to evolve into a more empathic and compassionate person.

Jung, Freud, Hinduism, the Buddha, expressed understanding of the existence of that part of the human unconscious that sees life feeding on life and, hence, that death and life are one.

2. A Cosmological Journey of Being

A theme that encompasses an evolutionary journey of the universe and of the human race.

A Story for the Eleventh Hour begins in the Beginning with the “Big Bang,” that point in time from which this cycle of the cosmological universe first began. This is the way the world begins, “Not with a bang, but a spark.” This spark is the spark of life, of consciousness. It represents not only that time when chaos came from order but also that instant when sperm and egg fuse in the ultimate reality, that ultimate creative act.

Just as spiral galaxies coalesce out of a seeming void, so the “eye/I” of life, of ego, coalesces out of the fertilized egg.

The cosmological journey of being takes one through the stages of self and, finally, into the peace of enlightenment, a nirvana where “I” and “thou” are one. At this stage, each life achieves a Buddha-like existence at peace with earth (the world of people) and sky (the world of the spirit) alike.

Christ, Buddha, and each of us must return to the world where we sacrifice our inner harmony in an attempt to help our desperate species deal with the problems of the world at the brink, at the eleventh hour.

Finally, enough human beings achieve compassionate interdependence so that Buddha consciousness spreads from earth to nearby stars and further out into the reaches of time.

3. Visualizing Metaphysical and Spiritual Concepts

A Story for the Eleventh Hour reminds us that all metaphysical systems say the same thing, that all life is sacred.

A favorite theory of Swartz is that of Sheldrake’s morphogenetic field:

What I suggest is the existence of memory inherent in each organism in what I call its morphogenetic field. As time goes on, each type of organism forms a specific kind of cumulative collective memory. The regularities of nature are therefore habitual. Things are as they are because they were as they were. The universe is an evolving system of habits. For example, when a crystal crystallizes, the form it takes depends on the way similar crystals were formed in the past...

Swartz paints a journey of self that issues an invitation to each person to look into her or his life in order to change...



Coalescence mixed media on canvas 39½" x 30"
PLATE 2

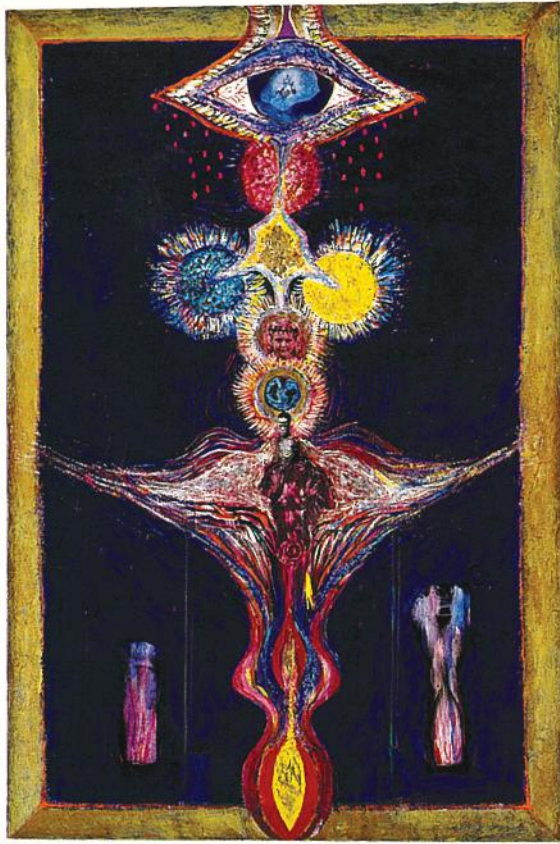


PLATE 3



PLATE 4

- PLATE 3 *A Personal Story: Wounding*
mixed media on canvas 36" x 24"
- PLATE 4 *A Personal Story: Childhood*
mixed media on canvas 36" x 24"
- PLATE 5 *A Personal Story: Adulthood*
mixed media on canvas 36" x 24"
- PLATE 6 *A Personal Story: Maturity*
mixed media on canvas 36" x 24"
- PLATE 7 *A Personal Story: Initiation*
mixed media on canvas 36" x 24"
- PLATE 8 *A Personal Story: Integration*
mixed media on canvas 36" x 24"
- PLATE 9 *A Personal Story: Transformation*
mixed media on canvas 36" x 24"



PLATE 7



PLATE 5



PLATE 6



PLATE 8



PLATE 9

This situation demands a new attitudinal response in which imagination is a kind of beacon — a scout sent ahead that precedes into history. Imagination is a kind of eschatological object shedding influence throughout the temporal dimension and throughout the morphological world.¹

Swartz seeks a world where each sentient being recognizes its interconnectedness with all other beings and the environment.

The painter's all-seeing eye conjures forth other philosophical and religious systems. Swartz intertwines myth-like visual elements from Buddhism, Christianity, the Cabala (an occult teaching with Hebraic sources), the chakra system of yoga and the even more esoteric learning of the Seven Rays. ("The teachings of the Seven Rays provide a key to a preliminary understanding of the Divine Plan of Creation on cosmic, solar, planetary, human, and subhuman levels, and our place in the scheme as a whole. It is a holistic approach, a synthesis of invisible and visible worlds."²)

Embedded in *A Story for the Eleventh Hour* is a sense of the artist as a performer, as magician. Swartz visualizes a story of the inner world within our minds; she paints a golden frame for the eye, focusing our attention soul-ward.

Swartz seeks a world where each sentient being recognizes its interconnectedness with all other beings and the environment.

4. Still Time

Time past and time future are present in time now. All things change. The great wheel of the law set spinning by the Buddha started in motion a new cycle of existence that eventually will be supplanted by a new Buddha. The universe may once again coalesce into a primordial point only to spark forth once again. We are born. We die. This is the karma of what it means to be alive and sentient.

A favorite spiritual source for Swartz is T. S. Eliot, who used words to speak of many of things visualized by *A Story for the Eleventh Hour*. A lifelong love of Eliot reflects in Swartz titling four of the paintings in this exhibition using lines from Eliot poems, three from *Burnt Norton* and one from *The Waste Land*. Eliot mirrors her feeling toward time.

And all is always now³

In one sense, we all have all the time in the world; this is the sense of endless time that flows from Eastern thought — a sense of time that finds space for an inner peace "which passeth understanding." Yet, Swartz struggles with peace for she believes we live in a world at the eleventh hour, a world where 40,000 children die of hunger everyday on this planet. We humans are using air and water, polluting our planet, overpopulating it. For the species, time is running out.

Still, Swartz believes in the transforming power of people and of art. There is still time.

1. Ralph Abraham, Terence McKenna, Rupert Sheldrake, *Dialogues at the Edge of the West*, Bear & Company, Santa Fe, 1992, pgs. 5-7.

2. Helen S. Burmester, *Seven Rays Made Visual*, DeVorss & Co., New York, 1986 (which, it turns out, is based upon) Alice Bailey (as given to her by a Tibetan master, Djwhal Khul), *The Treatise on the Seven Rays*, Lucis Publishing Company, New York, 1970.

3. T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets: Burnt Norton*, line 149.

PAINTINGS IN AN EXHIBITION

A Story for the Eleventh Hour has a beginning, middle, and end; yet, in a larger sense, view the exhibition as a cyclical journey where each cycle of creation (and of viewing) moves us to a higher level of understanding.

1. *Beginning*

That point in time when the universe begins a cycle of creation; the moment of the “Big Bang.” That point in time when the spark of life surges forth from inanimate matter.

2. *Coalescence*

A period in time several billion years after the “Big Bang,” after matter as we know it formed and began drawing itself together under the influence of gravity, ultimately forming galaxies. Also, a (later) period in time (than the coalescence of galaxies) when intelligent life begins the slow spiral up from the primordial ooze along the way to enlightenment.

- 3-9. *A Personal Story* is a seven work subset of the exhibition, *A Story for the Eleventh Hour*; the paintings include *Wounding*, *Childhood*, *Adulthood*, *Maturity*, *Initiation*, *Integration*, and *Transformation*.

These seven paintings represent phases of biological and spiritual development in an individual. Each of the seven paintings corresponds to one of the seven chakras of certain systems of yoga. Chakras have analogs in the physical world roughly located (in certain systems) at base of spine, genitalia, solar plexus, heart, throat, third eye (forehead), and crown of head. The word “chakra” comes from the Sanskrit for “wheel” or “circle.” Chakras are, “...the centers of subtle or refined energy in the human body. Although developed by Hinduism, the system of chakras also plays a role in Buddhism, especially Tantric Buddhism. In basic outline the system of energy centers (chakras) and connecting channels (nadi) is the same as in kundalini-yoga.”⁴

The concept behind *A Personal Story* grew from “seeds” seen by Swartz in *Seven Rays Made Visual* by Helen S. Burmester, a book that interprets Alice Bailey’s interpretation of her master’s teachings. Each of the seven paintings in *A Personal Story* corresponds to one of the seven rays of Burmester and Bailey and Djwhal Khul. For Swartz, art results from a sequence of interconnected human thought across the morphogenetic field of time and space.

The sequence of biologic and spiritual development represented by the subset of paintings forming *A Personal Story* visualizes a concept similar to one expressed by Jean Houston, “Soulmaking requires that you die to one story to be reborn to a larger one.”⁵

A key facet of *A Personal Story* is the appearance of an overpainted photograph of a bronze, *Descending Night*, (by Adolph Alexander Weinman, 1870-1952) in the seven paintings comprising the subset; Weinman depicted Night as a female nude with wings — an angel.

Swartz wants to believe in angels, not as an obsession but as a matter of faith. Earlier exhibitions of works by Swartz grew from a study of the Cabala that sparked her interest in the feminine aspect of god, the Shekhinah. A more recent body of paintings by Swartz depicts angels; she exhibited this group of paintings under the title *Celestial Visitations*.

Subsequently, Swartz happened upon a winged male figure cast in bronze by Weinman and entitled *Rising Day*. Swartz worked with the image of *Rising Day* repeatedly, often transforming the male into an androgynous angel by adding a symbolic wound in the genital region. A possible belief by Swartz in the invisible hand strengthened when she discovered, by chance, *Descending Night*, an angelic female counterpoint to *Rising Day*.

4. *The Shambhala Dictionary of Buddhism and Zen*, Shambhala, Boston, 1991, p. 40.

5. Jean Houston, *The Search for the Beloved*, Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc., Los Angeles, 1987, p. 104



And the lotos rose, quietly, quietly mixed media on canvas 48" x 36"
PLATE 10



A white light still and moving mixed media on canvas 48" x 36"
PLATE 11

For Swartz, *Descending Night* also carries echoes of Kali, the Black Goddess. In traditional Hindu thought, Kali represents an aspect of Shiva. Western thought separates good and evil, God and Devil. Eastern thought believes all dichotomies are aspects of one, of the Tao, of humanity.

Swartz paints a bright picture; she gifts the Black Goddess with white feathered wings — a reference to her interest in angels, and her bow to a favorite line of this writer:

Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.⁶

The wings of Holy Ghost, angels, *Descending Night*, and the Black Goddess carry Swartz ever farther inward.

Climbing the torso of *Descending Night*, the painter places chakras roughly situated in their presumed physical world analog. Each chakra (and ray) scintillates with its own special color, its own special energy.

The patterned backgrounds of the seven phases of *A Personal Story* represent different mythic icons: from the tears of *Wounding* to the lotus of *Transformation*.

At bottom (right and left) phallic-like objects mysteriously haunt the inner world, seeming nightmares from a painting by Francis Bacon. Yet, Swartz casts a gentler spell: these moving images of water flow from the artist's reading of **Sensitive Chaos: the Creation of Flowing Forms in Water and Air**⁷. A river, our mother, courses within us, ever ready to transmit each attentive listener gently through the chaos of time.

*Swartz mixes visual icons
from different philosophies
and religions complementing
Eliot's blending of words.*

The little girl caught forever in the center of the painting is Swartz, age seven. Her third eye slowly opens as she grows in self knowledge. She wears a crown of thorns, a memory of the wound always present in time future. Wings and Goddess form a cross she must bear.

Below, fluid forms (for Swartz) form a chalice, her reference to Riane Eisler's **The Chalice and the Blade** — a book that suggests substituting nurturing, maternal values for five thousand years of aggressive, paternally dominated societies. These fluid, labia-like forms bleed outside the frame connecting the interior world of the spirit, through the sense organs, to external reality.

Above, the all-seeing eye stares outward and inward, framing our inner night in a painter's halo of gold.

10. *And the lotos rose, quietly, quietly*

A painting such as this one (and the one that follows it) culminates from artistic and spiritual wells reached by few people. The painting communicates serenity.

The title comes from *Burnt Norton* (line 36). The word "lotos" is a variant of "lotus," an aquatic plant that, though it has roots in the mud, blossoms beautifully in the world above. Eliot plays on the word "Logos," both the cosmic reason of Greek philosophy and the Christian will of God. In Buddhism and Hinduism, the lotus represents a symbol for elevation to the last chakra, the attainment of spiritual awakening and enlightenment, the transformation to nirvana. ("Nirvana...it is departure from the cycle of rebirths and entry into an entirely different mode of existence. It requires complete overcoming of the three unwholesome roots — desire, hatred and delusion — and the coming to rest of active volition."⁸)

6. Gerard Manley Hopkins, *God's Grandeur*, lines 13-14.

7. Theodor Schwenk, *Sensitive Chaos: the Creation of Flowing Forms in Water and Air*, Rudolph Steiner Press, London, 1965; reprinted by Schocken Books, New York, 1976.

8. *Shambhala, op. cit.*, p. 159.

Eliot complements “lotos” with “rose,” a word that is both verb and subject. The rose flower, an often used visual symbol of Christianity, appears in conjunction with the lotus, symbol of Buddhism. Swartz mixes visual icons from different philosophies and religions complementing Eliot’s blending of words.

The Buddha holds the world in its hands. Enlightened being floats effortlessly above the world. Swartz paints the landscape depicted below the Buddha in a style of her former *Fire Works*.

Three of the seven chakras hold enlightened being in stasis between a state of nirvana and a Buddhist-orange landscape. Harmony reigns among the spheres. All is calm. Time still.

11. *A white light still and moving*

A moving painting that conveys enormous spiritual harmony.

The Buddhist-orange color of the last landscape returns to the awakened soul presaging its eventual return to the world.

The four chakras not depicted in *And the lotos rose, quietly, quietly* appear. Stasis still reigns, but three of the chakras (on the right) form a triangular circle, seemly ready to whirl. The title for this painting once again comes from *Burnt Norton* (line 73). The triune chakras seem poised, ready to blend, thereby forming white light.

These three chakras light the way for a return; they are both still and moving.

12. *The Return: Encountering the Spiral at the Eleventh Hour*

A bodhisattva is one who, out of compassion, forgoes nirvana for the sake of saving others.

Swartz paints a hero returned from the tranquillity of personal awakening back into the world of being. (May a hero’s journey be that of a heroine?) She asks we follow the example of those who went before.

Awakened consciousness returns to a world where it encounters the spiral of life, a symbol for both the double helix of DNA (the basis of all known life) and the traditional representation of the kundalini symbolized by two snakes, intertwined in a spiral-like way.

Swartz introduces red into what previously was a sea of blue. Her use of red represents not only the life force reawakened but also a throbbing phrase from *Burnt Norton* (lines 50-55):

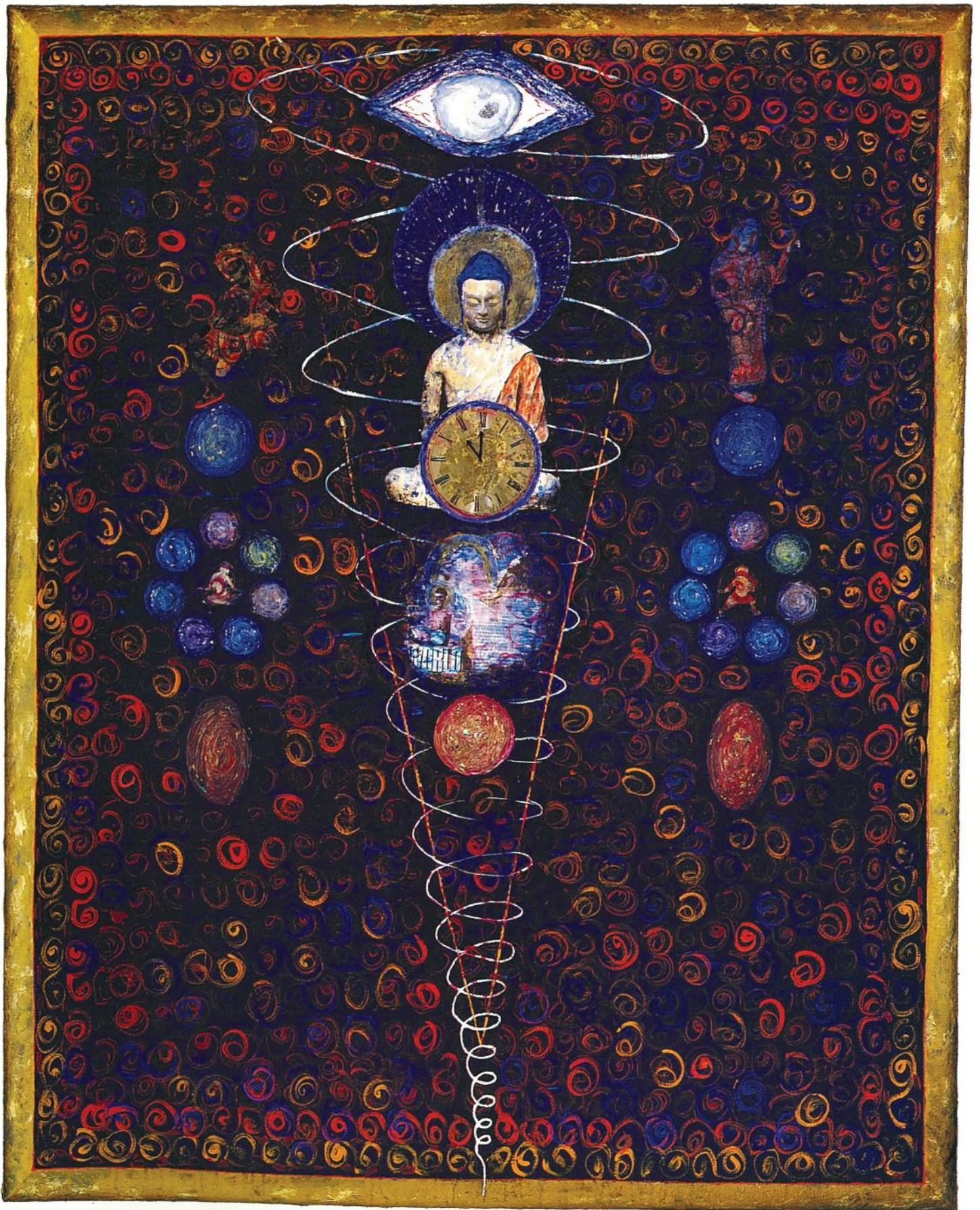
The trilling wire in the blood
Sings below inveterate scars
Appeasing long forgotten wars.
The dance along the artery
The circulation of the lymph
Are figured in the drift of stars

The powerful gravity of earthly concern draws being into being; yet, to the left and right of the tree of life the seven chakras circle in a harmony distorted by grave concerns. Male and female, yang and yin, still exist as separate reality.

The time is 11:00 p.m. The eyes see. Children still starve.

13. *The Return: Charging the Species at the Eleventh Hour*

It is now 11:15 p.m. The seven chakras and the seven rays take on new aspects relating each aspect of existence to all other aspects. Male and female forms fuse into one holistic entity.



The Return: Encountering the Spiral at the Eleventh Hour mixed media on canvas 60" x 48"
PLATE 12



The Return: Charging the Species at the Eleventh Hour
PLATE 13

mixed media on canvas

60" x 48"

All bodhisattvas carry stigmata, that is, they carry Eliot's "inveterate scars." Western minds often associate such marks with the crucifixion wounds of Jesus, yet Swartz used a book on Eastern art as a source for her images of stigmatized hands and feet.⁹

The Buddha, who now is a bodhisattva, once again adds Buddhist-orange to its spirit.

Children still starve; however, now they "top the clock." "New players" exist for a "new world." Perhaps, the race may win the race.

14. *Reconciled among the stars*

Swartz returns to her vision of the words of a visionary poet:

Garlic and sapphires in the mud
Clot the bedded axle-tree.
The trilling wire in the blood
Sings below inveterate scars
Appeasing long forgotten wars.
The dance along the artery
The circulation of the lymph
Are figured in the drift of stars
Ascend to summer in the tree
We move above the moving tree
In light upon the sodden floor
Below, the boarhound and the boar
Pursue their pattern as before
But reconciled among the stars.¹⁰

The painting *Reconciled among the stars* depicts the connection between earth and sky, between the external world of physical reality and the internal world of spiritual truth. Seven rays connect earth and sky; the seven rays have a cosmological reality in seven heavenly bodies and a biologic reality in the seven chakras. The gravity of all influences these rays.

This painting depicts a move from individual enlightenment to collective enlightenment. Swartz recalls reading **The Hundred Monkey Theory** (which, itself, is a book extending Sheldrake's earlier cited theory of the morphogenetic field). *Reconciled among the stars* visualizes **The Hundred Monkey Theory**, a theory that postulates that, if 200,000 people achieve a state of empathic compassionate action (i.e., enlightenment), the entire human race will move to Buddha-consciousness. Swartz paints a universe where each star in the heavens represents an enlightened being.

15. *Shantih shantih shantih*

The hour is twelve o'clock. The Buddha (a symbol for spiritual enlightenment) recedes in importance since sufficient sentient beings are awake. Cords (i.e., rays) no longer bind beings to the physical world of earth. Sentience spreads from earth's shores into our galaxy.

Eliot ends *The Waste Land* (line 434) with the words, "Shantih shantih shantih." The poet refers to a formal ending to the Upanishads, philosophical treatises elaborating on earlier Vedas and contributing to ancient Hindu theology. Swartz's repetition of this ancient word echoes Eliot's seeming prayer for this word, *shantih*, translates as, "The peace which passeth understanding."

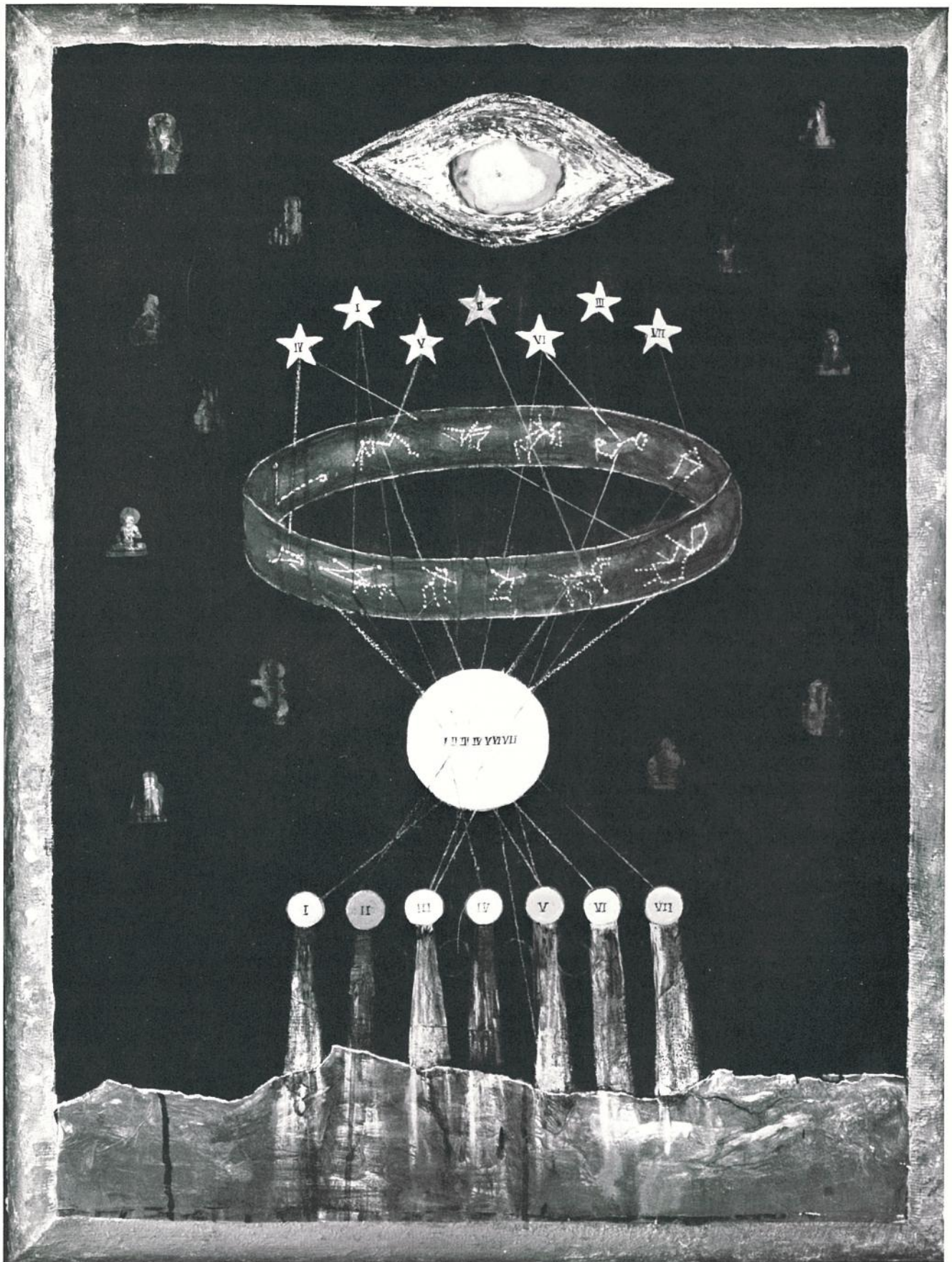
Thus, Swartz ends *A Story for the Eleventh Hour* with a rune, an incantation, a visual prayer offering up new shores that wait for those able to see.

Now, a story begins again.

John D. Rothschild
December, 1993

9. Marilyn M. Rhee and Robert A. F. Thurman, **Wisdom and Compassion: the Sacred Art of Tibet**, Harry N. Abrams, New York, 1991.

10. Eliot, *op. cit.*, lines 48-61.



Reconciled among the stars

mixed media on canvas
PLATE 14

39½" x 30"



Shantih shantih shantih mixed media on canvas 39½" x 30"
PLATE 15

PAINTINGS IN THE EXHIBITION

All fifteen paintings were completed in 1993

- PLATE 1 *Beginning* sliced geode, gold and silver leaf, mixed media on canvas 39½" x 30"
- PLATE 2 *Coalescence* sliced geode, gold and silver leaf, mixed media on canvas 39½" x 30"
- PLATE 3 *A Personal Story: Wounding* sliced geode, gold and silver leaf, mixed media on canvas 36" x 24"
- PLATE 4 *A Personal Story: Childhood* sliced geode, gold and silver leaf, mixed media on canvas 36" x 24"
- PLATE 5 *A Personal Story: Adulthood* sliced geode, gold and silver leaf, mixed media on canvas 36" x 24"
- PLATE 6 *A Personal Story: Maturity* sliced geode, gold and silver leaf, mixed media on canvas 36" x 24"
- PLATE 7 *A Personal Story: Initiation* sliced geode, gold and silver leaf, mixed media on canvas 36" x 24"
- PLATE 8 *A Personal Story: Integration* sliced geode, gold and silver leaf, mixed media on canvas 36" x 24"
- PLATE 9 *A Personal Story: Transformation* sliced geode, gold and silver leaf, mixed media on canvas 36" x 24"
- PLATE 10 *And the lotos rose, quietly, quietly* sliced geode, gold and silver leaf, mixed media on canvas 48" x 36"
- PLATE 11 *A white light still and moving* sliced geode, gold and silver leaf, mixed media on canvas 48" x 36"
- PLATE 12 *The Return: Encountering the Spiral at the Eleventh Hour* sliced geode, gold and silver leaf, mixed media on canvas 60" x 48"
- PLATE 13 *The Return: Charging the Species at the Eleventh Hour* sliced geode, gold and silver leaf, mixed media on canvas 60" x 48"
- PLATE 14 *Reconciled among the stars* sliced geode, gold and silver leaf, mixed media on canvas 39½" x 30"
- PLATE 15 *Shantih shantih shantih* sliced geode, gold and silver leaf, mixed media on canvas 39½" x 30"

BIOGRAPHY

BORN: New York, New York, 1936
EDUCATION: B.S. Degree
Cornell University, 1957
M.A. Degree
New York University, 1960

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

1994 E. M. Donahue Gallery, New York, New York
1992 Artefino Gallery, Charlotte, North Carolina
1991 Tilden/Foley Gallery, New Orleans, Louisiana
1989 Elaine Horwitch Galleries, Palm Springs, California
1989-1988 New Gallery, Houston, Texas
1990,'88,'86,'84,'82,'80,'79 Elaine Horwitch Galleries, Scottsdale, AZ
1992-1985 *A Moving Point of Balance* Traveling Museum Exhibition: The Nickle Arts Museum, Calgary Canada; Multicultural Arts Center, San Diego, California; Woodbridge Conference Center, Snowmass Village, Aspen, Colorado; University of Arizona Museum of Art, Tucson, Arizona; Coconino Center for the Arts, Flagstaff, Arizona; Newhouse Center for Contemporary Art, Staten Island, New York; Salt Lake Art Center, Salt Lake City, Utah; Palm Springs Desert Museum, Palm Springs, California; University Art Museum, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona
1985 ACA Galleries, New York
1986,'84 The Gallery, York, Pennsylvania
1982 Sun Valley Center for the Arts and Humanities, Sun Valley, Idaho
1984,'82 J. Rosenthal Fine Arts, Chicago, Illinois
1983-1981 *Israel Revisited* Traveling Museum Exhibition: The Jewish Museum, New York, New York; University of California, Irvine, California; Skirball Museum, Los Angeles, California; University of Arizona Museum of Art, Tucson, Arizona; Judah Magnes Museum, Berkeley, California; Beaumont Museum of Art, Texas; Albuquerque Museum of Art, New Mexico; American Cultural Centers in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem
1981,'79 Frank Marino Gallery, New York, New York
1979 Springfield Art Museum, Springfield, Missouri
1978 Jasper Gallery, Denver, Colorado
1978 *Inquiry Into Fire*, Scottsdale Center for the Arts, Scottsdale, Arizona
1977 "Ten Take Ten," Ten-Year Retrospective, Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, Colorado Springs, Colorado
1976 Attitudes Gallery, Denver, Colorado
1976 Bob Tomlinson Gallery, Albuquerque, New Mexico
1972 Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona
1971 Galleria Janna, Mexico City, Mexico

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

1994 Body and Soul: Contemporary Art and Healing, De Cordova Museum and Sculpture Park, Lincoln, Massachusetts
1993 Sacred Arts Symposium, New York, New York
1993 Summer Group Exhibition, E. M. Donahue Gallery, New York, New York
1992 "The Wounded Healer," E. M. Donahue Gallery, New York, New York
1992 "Dreams and Shields," Salt Lake Art Center, Salt Lake City, Utah
1991 "Sacred Spaces," Traveling Museum Exhibition, Chelsea Center, Long Island, New York and others
1989 Phyllis Weil & Co., New York, New York

- 1988 "The Transformative Vision," Newhouse Center for Contemporary Art, Staten Island, NY
- 1987 Artists of the Western States Biennial, Elaine Horwitch Galleries, Palm Springs, California
- 1986 "Artist as Shaman," Women's Building, Los Angeles, California
- 1983 Exchange of Sources Expanding Powers — Traveling Museum Exhibition, California State College and others
- 1982 "Nature as Metaphor," sponsored by the National Women's Caucus for Art, New York, New York
- 1981 "Paper: Surface and Image," Traveling Museum Exhibition, Rutgers University, New Jersey and others
- 1981-82 "Arizona Invitational," Scottsdale Center for the Arts, Scottsdale, Arizona and Guadalajara, Mexico
- 1980-82 "Artists in the American Desert," Traveling Museum Exhibition under auspices of Western Association of Art Museums
- 1980-81 Gallery Group, Frank Marino Gallery, New York, New York
- 1980 "Aspects of Fire," Frank Marino Gallery, New York, New York
- 1979-81 "First Western States Biennial," Invitational Traveling Museum Exhibition, Denver Art Museum; National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and others
- 1979 Four Corners Biennial, Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix, Arizona
- 1978 "Expanded Image on Paper," Memorial Union, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona
- 1977 Whitney Counterweight, New York, New York
- 1976 "Looking at an Ancient Land," Fine Arts Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe, New Mexico
- 1975 Eight State Biennial, Grand Junction, Colorado
- 1975 Joslyn Museum, Omaha, Nebraska
- 1975 "Arizona/Women/75" Tucson Art Museum, Arizona
- 1968,'65 Arizona Annual Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix, Arizona

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- Seidel, Miriam. "The Wounded Healer." *The New Art Examiner*; April 1993
- Maschal, Richard. "Between fire and earth, Beth Ames Swartz finds art." *The Charlotte Observer* 9 February 1992
- Gablik, Suzi. *The Reenchantment of Art*. Thames and Hudson. New York, 1991: 155-157pp.
- Carde, Margret. "Dreams for the Earth." *DesignSpirit* Winter, 1991: 36-42pp.
- Cembalest, Robin. "The Ecological Art Explosion." *ARTnews* Summer, 1991: 96-105pp.
- Blumenthal, Carol. "From Gallery to Garden: The Greening of Art in New York." *Whole Earth Dreams* July, 1991: 1-2pp.
- Klein, Eleanore. "The Friendly Universe of Beth Ames Swartz." *Today's Arizona Woman* January, 1990: 28-29pp.
- Cooper, Evelyn S. "7 transformative paintings aim for heart, not head." *The Arizona Republic* 29 December 1989.
- Beth Ames Swartz 1982-1988*. Exhibition Catalog for *A Moving Point of Balance* Traveling Museum Exhibition. Scottsdale: Beth Ames Swartz, 1988. 40 pp.
- Carde, Margret. "Beth Ames Swartz: Celestial Visitations." *Artspace* Summer 1988: 20-22.
- Pyne, Lynn. "Artist Approaches Life from a Different Angle." *Phoenix Gazette* 20 April 1988.
- Fressola, Michael. "Fresh Visions in Art and Film: New Age Art at the Newhouse," *Staten Island Advance* 1 March 1988.
- Carde, Margret. "Balancing Act: Latest Work of Beth Ames Swartz Set in Quiet, Healing Environment," *Phoenix Metro Magazine* May 1987: 68-70.
- Jennings, Jan. "Artist Aims for Emotional Response." *The Tribune* (San Diego) 8 May 1986.
- Stevens, Lianne. "Viewers Get the Picture at San Diego Art Experience." *The Los Angeles Times*, 29 April 1986.
- Lugo, Mark-Elliott. "Tradition is Exhibit 'Journey's' Point of Departure." *The Tribune* (San Diego) 10 April 1986.
- Miller, Jim. "A Painter's Picture of Perfect Health." *The University of Calgary Gazette* 12 June 1985.
- Nelson, Mary Carroll. *Connecting: The Art of Beth Ames Swartz*. Northland Press. Flagstaff, 1984. 135 pp. 41 color plates, 12 black and white plates.
- Perlman, Barbara. "Courage and Change." *Arizona Arts and Travel* March / April 1984: 35-38.
- Donnell-Kotrozo, Carol. "Beth Ames Swartz, Elaine Horwitch Galleries, *Artforum* November 1983: 16-17.
- Lippard, Lucy. *Overlay: Contemporary Art and the Art of Pre-History*, London: Pantheon Books, 1983
- Krapes, Shelley. "A Painter's Way with Paper," *Fiberarts* July-August 1982: 20

Rigberg, Lynn. "Beth Ames Swartz at Elaine Horwitch Galleries, Scottsdale." *Artspace* Summer 1982:73

Whitney, Fitzgerald. "Feminine Spirituality in Judaism." *Los Angeles Times* 15 May 1982

Cecil, Sarah. "New York Reviews: Beth Ames Swartz." *ARTnews* 2 February 1982.

Reed, Mary Lou. "A Vital Connection: Artist and Topography." *Woman's Art Journal* Fall/Winter 1981-1982: 42-45.

Reed, Mary Lou. "Beth Ames Swartz's Stylistic Development: 1960-1980." Diss., Arizona State University, 1981.

Perreault, John. "Just Desserts." *The Soho News* 13 October 1981

Rand, Harry. "Some Notes on the Recent Work of Beth Ames Swartz." *Arts Magazine* September 1981: 92-96.

Israel Revisited: Beth Ames Swartz Exhibition Catalog. Scottsdale: Beth Ames Swartz, 1981, Introduction by Harry Rand, Curator of 20th Century American Painting and Sculpture, National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, 43 pp.

Perreault, John. "Impressions of Arizona." *Art in America* April 1981: 40-42

Perlman, Barbara. "Arizona: Varied, Energetic and Exciting." *ARTnews* December 1980: 148-149

Perlman, Barbara. "Rites of Fire and Transformation." *Arizona Arts and Lifestyle* Winter 1980.

Locke, Donald. "Beth Ames Swartz at Elaine Horwitch, Scottsdale, Arizona." *Artspace* Winter 1980: 44-45

"An Odyssey." Prod. Misdee Chauncey. Channel 10 TV, Phoenix, October 1980. A ten minute color film of "Israel Revisited."

Donnell-Kotrozo, Carol. "Beth Ames Swartz." *Arts Magazine* February 1980: 11

"The New Art of the American West" film. Dick Young Productions, 1979. Funded by Phillip Morris, Inc., featuring six artists, based on "First Western States Biennial."

Nelson, Mary Carroll. "Beth Ames Swartz." *Artists of the Rockies and the Golden West* Fall 1979

Kingsley, April. "West Meets East." *Newsweek* 20 August 1979: 79

Perreault, John. "Western Omelet." *The Soho News* 26 July 1979

Ehrlich, Robbie. "Beth Ames Swartz — Frank Marino Gallery," *Arts Magazine* May 1979: 40.

Marvel, Bill. "A Move to Edge U.S. Art Focus Towards the Pacific." *Smithsonian Magazine* April 1979: 115

Wortz, Melinda. "The Fire and the Rose," *ARTnews* April 1978: 112

Inquiry into Fire Exhibition Catalog. Scottsdale Center for the Arts: Scottsdale, 1979. Intro. by Melinda Wortz. 28 pp.

Cortright, Barbara. "Beth Ames Swartz: The Signatory Aspects of Prometheus," *Artspace* Winter 1978: 10-16.

Peterson, William. "Review of 'Ten Take Ten' Exhibition." *Artspace* Fall 1977

Peterson, William. "Show's Paintings by Beth Ames Swartz Address Special Moments of Life." *New Mexican Independent* 17 September 1976

Cortright, Barbara. "The Look of Nature, the Flow of Paint." *Artweek* May 1975: 4

Arizona/Women/'75 Exhibition Catalog. Tucson: Tucson Art Museum, 1975

Joysmith, Toby. "Beth Ames Swartz," *Mexico City News* March 1970.

SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS:

National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, California

The Jewish Museum, New York, New York

Denver Art Museum, Denver, Colorado

Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York

Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix, Arizona

University Art Museum, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona

Scottsdale Center for the Arts, Scottsdale, Arizona

Museum of Fine Arts, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Albuquerque Museum of Art, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Tucson Museum of Art, Tucson, Arizona

Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York

The Brooklyn Museum, New York, New York

University of Arizona Museum of Art, Tucson, Arizona

Beaumont Art Museum, Beaumont, Texas

SELECTED CORPORATE COLLECTIONS

IBM Corporation, Endicott, New York
The Arizona Bank, Phoenix, Arizona
Temple Solel, Paradise Valley, Arizona
Prudential Life Insurance Company, Newark, New Jersey
Phelps Dodge Corporation, Phoenix, Arizona
RockResorts, Rockefeller Plaza, New York, New York
Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport, Phoenix, Arizona
Subaru Corporation, Denver, Colorado
Western Savings, Phoenix, Arizona
Valley National Bank, Phoenix, Arizona
Mountain Bell Telephone Company, Denver, Colorado
Doubletree Inns, Phoenix, Arizona
National Bank of Arizona, Scottsdale, Arizona
Canyon Ranch, Tucson, Arizona
Madison Green, New York, New York
Performing Arts Theatre, Calgary, Canada
The Byzantine Hotel, Rethymnon, Crete

SELECTED AWARDS & OTHER ACTIVITIES:

1994 Panelist: College Art Association: Art, Earth and Medicine: A Healing Approach
1993 Panelist: Sacred Arts Symposium, New York, New York 1993
1992 Speaker: MedArts Conference A Research Study on "A Moving Point of Balance"
1991 Speaker: "Art as a Healing Force" Symposium, California
1990 Keynote Speaker: Art and Healing Conference, New Harmony, Indiana
1988 Co-Founder: International Friends of Transformative Art, an international non-profit organization for positive global change.
1988,'87 Transformative Artist's Conference and Workshop, Project Coordinator, Rim Institute, Payson, Arizona
1985 Governor's Award, "Outstanding Women of Arizona."
1980 Artist in Residence, Sun Valley Center for the Arts & Humanities
1979 Artist in Residence, Volcano Art Center, Hawaii.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

SPONSORS 1994

Joy Anderson

Elizabeth Brazilian

Jonaé B. Christensen

Linda Cohn

Cinda and Thomas Cole

Ted G. Decker

LuAnn Evans

Florence and Arthur Farkas

Lorraine and William E. Hawkins

Beverly and John Johnson

Mary and Douglas A. Jordan

Eva and Eric Jungermann

Gaylene and Geno Ori

Kelley and Stanton S. Perry

Valerie and Herschel Richter

Arlene and Morton M. Scult

Nancy Stetson

Beverlee and Robert Tamis

Diane and Gary Tooker

Dana and Michael Treister

CATALOG EDITOR

Eva S. Jungermann

*We would like to thank Eva S. Jungermann for her editorial help
and advice in the preparation of this catalog.
A special thank you to Berta Sichel and John D. Rothschild for the catalog text.
Photography by Alexei Afonin*

