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Neysa Grassi: *Echo*, 2008,  
oil on linen, 54 by 50 inches;  
at Locks.

## Neysa Grassi

### Locks

Neysa Grassi's paintings invite the viewer to experience moments of quiet meditation while looking deeper and deeper into layers of paint. The 19 paintings and works on paper in "Losing and Finding," her recent exhibition at Locks, revealed a new subtlety of composition and tonal gradation. The abstract patterns that emerge in her work evoke forces of nature: light, wind, tides.

The seven suites on paper (all 2008) employ a medium new to Grassi—ink and gouache with a gum Arabic binder, which adds a subtle glaze. They seem to embody a spontaneous expression of emotion; looking at them is like reading a diary. The two 6-by-5½-inch pieces in *Losing and Finding (F)* are tranquil, with rhythmic horizontal waves of a blue tonality. The slightly larger pair in suite *D* are filled with upward lines of staccato energy, seeming to burst with creativity. *C*, a suite of four, signals moments of joy and communication.

The five oils on panel and seven oils on linen are densely painted reflections upon line and color. They continue and develop Grassi's signature multilayered style. Initial brushstrokes in pale tones are covered by strokes of opaque paint. However, the early layers remain partially visible for the dedicated viewer to discover. The small panel *Aurora* (2007-08) is a jubilant recognition of light, recalling Homer's description of rosy-fingered dawn. The 54-by-50-inch *Echo* (2008) suggests sound waves decreasing gradually until they disappear. The culmination of Grassi's vision is an approximately 5-foot-square untitled work (2006-08) that expresses her intense interest in the drawings and paintings of Giacometti. She captures his search for the stark essence of a subject in dynamic swirling layers of many colors, which she has added and scraped away repeatedly. In their evocation of the elements, Grassi's paintings, although rooted in Abstract Expressionism, seem to forge a new relationship between the individual and the environment.

—Anne R. Fabbri