



**JOHN HAMPSHIRE** *A CIRCUITOUS ROUTE*



*MJ*, 2013, charcoal on paper, 18 x 24 in.

Associate Professor of Studio Art John Hampshire has been a great asset to the SUNY Adirondack community since his arrival in 2005. Hampshire has shown leadership in his academic role while maintaining a career as an active, successful artist exhibiting and lecturing all over the United States in a variety of institutions. Currently alternating between two primary subjects and techniques he is able to easily prove his stellar artistic capabilities. His frontal portraits engage and mesmerize with their piercing stare while his tornadoes make your heart race as the turbulent cloud formations gather speed in front of you. What is most captivating about the work is the tremendous detail with which it is made. Whether applied with a sharpie marker or paintbrush, the meandering, rhythmic lines that travel all over the picture plane are simply dazzling. It is a thrill and an honor to exhibit his work this fall as he returns from a very productive spring sabbatical. Here at SUNY Adirondack we look forward to watching him continue a prolific career as an outstanding artist and remain an integral part of our teaching community.

Rebecca Pelchar

*Director of the Visual Arts Gallery*

## INTO THE LABYRINTH

Just as the *Labyrinth* that the artist often uses as the signifier of his hyper-graphic works, John Hampshire lures you into a world that is as seductive as the Sirens of ancient Greek lore. Where first your senses are filled with the expectation of straightforward gratification, the viewer soon discovers that s/he has rather been drawn into an experience that encapsulates more than the mere visual delights that are immediately discerned.

This is not to make light of the intense mark making that characterizes his work. Even the casual observer cannot but wonder at the imagination that invented these marvels and the patience that carried them out. Perhaps visual art is one of the last arenas in which an unbridled hedonism can still be celebrated. And it is here in spades. Since the artist so clearly invites you to enter in this fashion, we can only accept and enjoy this outer, straightforward layer.

But be reminded that a labyrinth is the antithesis of a simple stratum. It is rather all about the interior, and more apt, the *experience* of that interior as one is left to search for each successive step. We still may be in our world now, but we are also in the artist's world, and from this point forward we will need both references to make our way forward with a degree of accuracy.

As it is impossible to comprehend the paintings of Piet Mondrian without knowledge of his attraction to the Neo-Platonic constructs of Theosophy, one cannot understand John Hampshire without an awareness of his underlying interest in mathematics. We aren't talking arithmetic here. Far too few of us in the contemporary world are conscious of the multi-faceted dimensions of Theoretical Mathematics, an arena where Philosophy and the Physical Sciences converge in unexpected ways. There is more to *be* known than that which is already known, and in this fascination with uncertainty, a certain type of mind is beckoned to that call.

Having looked at Hampshire's paintings and drawings for fifteen years now, and conversing with him at length in subjects far beyond the realm of art, I put forth the hypothesis that herein lies the central core of his work, that which gives it its underlying power, and its ability to hold us well after the initial 'wow' factor has faded. Recall that the labyrinth was created not as a game without purpose, but rather to challenge those who entered to discover the hidden pathway to the treasure



**Labyrinth 290**, 2012-2013, ink on panel, 24 x 48 in.

within. In mythology the reasons for doing so are often deceptive, manipulative, and mischievous. In art, it is not necessarily so. Much more generously, in these works I believe it is the artist asking the viewer to come along with him to see what together you might discover. A key point not to be ignored is that the painter discovers his own experiences in the act of creating them.

In his most recent portraits (a core interest and subject) Hampshire unveils a new development that is certain to enrich his already impressive work in this genre. Previously, his paintings of individuals utilized a slow buildup of forms from a controlled beginning with larger brushstrokes, which were gradually covered with increasingly refined cross hatchings carried out with marks that are infinitesimally small. The process reminded me of the development of images in analog photographs, as they proceeded from indistinguishable patterns into sharp focus, revealing the precise reality of the objects themselves. Most, if not all, of the looser underlying work was covered over.

But in these latest portraits it is as if an atomic nucleus has exploded in a frenzy of strokes that can initially overwhelm. A dizzying array of colors and large linear movements dance across the canvas, whirling dervishes that can merely hint at what is to come. I've been privileged to see these new paintings in their earliest stages, and it is only upon faith that one believes that eventually they will morph into striking and highly recognizable images of people that the artist knows. To follow the development is delicious, so I urge viewers to do their best deciphering the progressive journey that Hampshire has taken. This will take concentration, but the effort is well worth it. For as stated earlier, as the artist creates the complex pathways in a frenzy of discovery, he simultaneously invites the viewer to join him in that journey. And this makes these images very honest, the accumulated product of searches for an unknowable ending. The promised treasure inside is available for all of us.

By their very nature, the Tornado Series images provide an opportunity for Hampshire to really let loose with his mastery of forms, and to explore a freedom unavailable in depicting the human face. The reality of these storms is frightening, the very shape of them projecting a massive force about to be unleashed upon a world that previously appeared to be safe. Tornadoes literally blow that feeling away. Yet the destructive essence of them provides a particular potency for this visual artist, a way to create an atmosphere of deceptive confusion from which something concrete can be coaxed into being. In the safety of creating a picture of this dangerous event, Hampshire is able to paradoxically *construct* a beautiful array of shapes and colors that further reveal his underlying talents as an abstractionist.

In total this exhibition serves as an intriguing moment in the ongoing development of a young artist who is prodigious in his output, uncompromising in his reaction to his own work, and as totally committed to the act of painting as anyone I have known. While delighting in these works, I for one cannot wait to see what comes next.

John Caputo

*Professor of Art, Curator of Art*



**Geoffrey**, 2013, acrylic on Yupo mounted on panel, 11 x 14 in.



**Mary Beth**, 2013, acrylic on Yupo mounted on panel, 11 x 14 in.



**John**, 2013, acrylic on panel, 11 x 14 in.



**Eric**, 2013, acrylic on Yupo mounted on panel, 11 x 14 in.



**Megan**, 2013, acrylic on panel, 11 x 14 in.



**Nicole**, 2013, acrylic on panel, 11 x 14 in.



**Jim**, 2013, acrylic on panel, 11 x 14 in.



**MJ2**, 2013, acrylic on panel, 11 x 14 in.



**Chandler**, 2013, acrylic on panel, 11 x 14 in.



**Christina**, 2013, acrylic on panel, 11 x 14 in.



**Colleen**, 2013, acrylic on panel, 11 x 14 in.



**Self Portrait**, 2013, acrylic on Yupo mounted on panel, 11 x 14 in.

## ARTIST'S STATEMENT

The work in this exhibition is the bulk of what I have produced during my spring sabbatical. This body can be broken into two categories— composite tornadic weather-scapes and portraits.

The weather-scapes, many of which are titled “labyrinths”, are based from multiple, appropriated storm images and imagination. In the act of making these, I bend, distort, combine and invent imagery, thus constructing a completely new image. The term labyrinth refers to the structure and process through which these drawings are created.

The portraits, which I started in February as a relief from the intricacies of the process for the storm drawings, are a bit different in nature. The storms are ephemeral and fleeting, implying past and pending change. The portraits are tangible subjects that are recognizable to the point of allowing an immense amount of abstraction. In both subjects, I am interested in delicate and dramatic changes of light, whether across form or through space. Contrasting these transitory qualities is the definite and assertive presence of marks which both define and interfere with the implied image. Whether in paint or ink, I apply material to a surface with little or no manipulation. Even the paintings (with one exception) are very non-painterly, with no pushing, blending, scumbling or glazing occurring. The process is something I want to remain apparent to the viewer. I want the start, middle and end of the works' creations to be visible simultaneously.

My drawing process is easier to describe than the painting process due to the more direct, and perhaps singular, nature of the drawing. It starts with a very long line, usually a spiral, of late. I continue to make lines with the “rule” that I not cross any of the previous lines. The result is a self refining process. At the beginning, the lines or marks are very loosely responsive to the image I am building. As this progresses, the white spaces I have remaining to put lines in become smaller and smaller, and the information that gets built into the drawing becomes more and more specific. This synthesis of process and image, while very time consuming, feels very fluent and natural to me. The act of making these drawings, I imagine, is like jumping into a big vat of molasses; the initial descent in would be fast, but then the submergence would get progressively slower until movement stops, because of the viscosity of the medium.

While the images or initial marks may be energetic in nature, perhaps even violent, these energies are embedded in an extremely meditative process, involving a repetitive and seemingly mindless routine that is comparable to the mantra of sweeping or raking.

I omit the charcoal drawings from the rigors of the above descriptions. These were done purely for play. More closely related to what I do as demonstrations for my classes, they are direct and not in any way work. Since I was not teaching any classes this spring, the making of these drawings served as a surrogate for that missed activity that I otherwise routinely engage in.

I would like to thank the entire SUNY Adirondack community for the support and the opportunities that my sabbatical this past spring provided. I hope that the work in this show reflects some of what I was able to accomplish and the impetus that has come out of this time to focus. I would also like to offer my sincere gratitude to the Gallery Director, Rebecca Pelchar, for all of the hard work she put into this show, which would not have occurred without her. Her time, support and camaraderie have been invaluable and she is a cherished colleague.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Mary Beth, for her endless support and tolerance of the toll daily studio activities (as well as a month long residency) can take on domestic time. Art making, while addictive, is not always an easy choice and Mary Beth's understanding in these regards has been a wonderful gift.

# JOHN HAMPSHIRE

## EDUCATION

- 1997 MFA in Painting, State University of New York at Albany, Albany, NY
- 1994 BS in Studio Art, Dean's List, Periclean Society, Cum Laude, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY

## SELECTED ONE / TWO PERSON EXHIBITIONS

- 2012 *NYFA Artists John Hampshire & Adam Daily*, Booz and Co., New York City, NY
- 2010 *John Hampshire & Russell Serrienne*, Ivy Associates Gallery, Schuylerville, NY
- 2009 *Expressive Eccentricities*, State College of Florida, Bradenton, FL
- 2008 *Layers and Labyrinths*, curated by LL Powers, The Show Walls, New York City, NY
- 2007 Adirondack Lakes Center for the Arts, Blue Mountain Lake, NY
- 2006 *Material Dissolution*, Visual Arts Gallery, SUNY Adirondack, Queensbury, NY
- 2005 *John Hampshire & Wren Panzella*, Northpointe Gallery and Cultural Center, Kinderhook, NY  
*Face to Face: John Hampshire and Sara Didonato*, Sayles School of Fine Arts, Schenectady, NY
- 2004 Pierce Art Gallery, West Virginia University, Montgomery, WV  
Walsh Gallery, Georgetown University, Washington D.C.
- 2003 *John Hampshire and Gary Shankman*, First Unitarian Church, Schenectady, NY
- 2002 The Main Street Gallery, Dobbs Ferry, NY  
The Yates Gallery, Siena College, Loudonville, NY
- 2001 Vertical Gallery, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, NY  
*Portraits*, Hunter Gallery, Newport, RI  
*Labyrinthine Portraits*, Hudson Valley Community College, Troy, NY
- 2000 The Main Street Gallery, Dobbs Ferry, NY
- 1999 *Paintings by John Hampshire and Jennifer Gordon*, Spencertown Academy, Spencertown, NY  
Courthouse Gallery, Lake George Arts Project, Lake George, NY  
Grosvenor Gallery, SUNY Cobleskill, Cobleskill, NY
- 1997 Berkshire Community College, Pittsfield, MA

## SELECTED GROUP / JURIED EXHIBITIONS

- 2013 *Postcards from the Edge*, Sikkema Jenkins Gallery, New York City, NY
- 2012 *Natural/Constructed Spaces*, The Painting Center, New York City, NY
- 2011 *After School Special: The 2011 Alumni Show*, curated by Ken Johnson, SUNY Albany Art Museum, Albany, NY  
*Unabashed*, Dacia Gallery, New York City, NY  
*Kaleidoscope*, Lana Santorelli Gallery, Hoboken, NJ  
*Postcards from the Edge*, CRG Gallery, New York City, NY
- 2010 *Black and White*, Lana Santorelli Gallery, New York City, NY
- 2009 *International Small Works Exhibition*, New York University, New York City, NY  
*Postcards from the Edge*, Metro Pictures, New York City, NY
- 2008 *As Others See Us*, Brattleboro Museum, Brattleboro, VT  
*International Small Works Exhibition*, New York University, New York City, NY
- 2007 *Postcards from the Edge*, James Cohen Gallery, New York City, NY
- 2006 *Nurturing the Edge*, CUE Art Foundation, 511 W. 25th St. New York City, NY  
*International Small Works Exhibition*, Juror's Award, New York University, New York City, NY  
*Oakroom Arts Exhibition*, Schenectady Museum, Schenectady, NY
- 2005 *28th Annual Small Works Show*, curated by Claudia Stone, New York University, New York City, NY
- 2004 MMAS, Florida International University, FL  
*National 2004*, Cooperstown Art Association, Cooperstown, NY  
*27th Annual Small Works Show*, curated by Molly Barnes, New York University, New York City, NY

- 2003 *Unplugged*, curated by Sharon Bates, Albany International Airport, Albany, NY  
*Exhibition of Visiting Assistant Faculty*, curated by Paul Sattler, Schick Art Gallery, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY  
*26th International Small Works Show*, juried by Tatyana Okshteyn, Juror's Award, New York University, New York City, NY  
*Small Works*, NURTUREart, Chelsea, New York City, NY
- 2002 *Containment*, curated by Richard Cox, Llantarnam Grange Arts Center, South Wales, United Kingdom  
*25th Annual Small Works Show*, curated by Barbara Millstein, Juror's Award, New York University, New York City, NY
- 2001 *International Works on Paper*, juried by Krishna Reddy, Soho20 Gallery, New York City, NY  
*Invitational International Art Exhibition*, Period Gallery, Omaha, NE  
*Every Picture Tells a Story: Narrative Paintings*, The Main Street Gallery, Dobbs Ferry, NY
- 2000 *On/Of Paper*, juried by Lisa Tremper Hanover, Cloyde Snook Gallery, Adams State College, Alamosa, CO  
*National 2000*, juried by Jerome Witkin, two awards received, Cooperstown Art Association, Cooperstown, NY  
*RE /Surface*, juried by Joshua Rose, Marshall Arts Gallery, Scottsdale, AZ  
*Current Work: A National Competition 2000*, juried show, Fayetteville State University, Fayetteville, NC
- 1999 *Summer Six Faculty Art Show*, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY  
*Brian Cesario, Dallas Cheek, John Hampshire, and Erin Obrochta*, The Firehouse Gallery, Bordentown, NJ
- 1998 *Artists of NY*, juried by Jerome Witkin, Schweinfurth Memorial Center, Auburn, NY  
*Artists of the Mohawk-Hudson Region*, juried by Lela Hersh, Albany International Airport, Albany, NY  
*Body Image*, curated by Ken Johnson, Rathbone Gallery, Sage Junior College of Albany, Albany, NY  
*NYS Biennial Exhibition*, curated by Linda Weintraub, New York State Museum, Albany, NY

### SELECTED HONORS/AWARDS

- SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activity, Queensbury, NY  
2011 Purchase Award, Hyde Art Museum, Glens Falls, NY  
New York Foundation for the Arts 2011 Fellowship Award in Printmaking/ Drawing/ Book Arts  
Dr. Arthur C. Collins '48 Purchase Award, University at Albany, Albany, NY. Awarded at Mohawk Hudson Regional at The Hyde Collection, Glens Falls, NY  
Juror's Award, *Fence Show Select*, 2011, 2009, 2006, The Arts Center of the Capital Region, Albany, NY  
SUNY Adirondack Foundation Mini-Grant for Spring 2008 open model sessions, Queensbury, NY  
Juror's Award, *International Small Works Exhibition*, New York University, New York City, NY  
2009, 2007, 2006, 2003, 2002, Honorable mention in 2001  
Two Juror's Awards received in *National 2000* at Cooperstown Art Association, Cooperstown, NY

### RESIDENCIES

- 2013 The Vermont Studio Center  
1998-09 Teaching Artist in Residence, Summer Programs, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY

### SELECTED LECTURES

- 2013 Booz and Company, New York City, NY  
University of Tampa, Tampa, FL
- 2011 LARAC, Glens Falls, NY
- 2009 State College of Florida Manatee, Bradenton, FL
- 2008 The Darrow School, New Lebanon, NY
- 2004 Georgetown University, Georgetown, Washington, DC  
Albany/Colonie League of Arts, Albany, NY
- 2002 Siena College, Loudonville, NY
- 2001 Niskayuna High School, Niskayuna, NY  
St. Georges School, Newport, RI  
Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY
- 1999 SUNY Cobleskill, Cobleskill, NY
- 1997 Berkshire Community College, Pittsfield, MA

**JOHN HAMPSHIRE: A CIRCUITOUS ROUTE**

Visual Arts Gallery, SUNY Adirondack, Queensbury, NY  
September 4 through November 7, 2013

**EXHIBITION CHECKLIST**

WEATHER-SCAPES

- Labyrinth 295*, 2013, ink, acrylic on panel, 24 x 48 in.
- Labyrinth 297*, 2013, ink on panel, 24 x 48 in.
- Labyrinth 298*, 2013, ink on panel, 24 x 48 in.
- Intruder*, 2013, acrylic, oil on panel, 24 x 48 in.
- Chase*, 2013, acrylic on panel, 24 x 48 in.
- Labyrinth 301*, 2013, ink on panel, 36 x 80 in.
- Labyrinth 269*, 2011-2013, ink on panel, 32 x 80 in.
- Labyrinth 290*, 2012-2013, ink on panel, 24 x 48 in.

PORTRAITS

- Rebecca*, 2013, acrylic on Yupo mounted on panel, 11 x 14 in.
- Mary Beth*, 2013, acrylic on Yupo mounted on panel, 11 x 14 in.
- Self Portrait*, 2013, acrylic on Yupo mounted on panel, 11 x 14 in.
- Eric*, 2013, acrylic on Yupo mounted on panel, 11 x 14 in.
- Geoffrey*, 2013, acrylic on Yupo mounted on panel, 11 x 14 in.
- Jim*, 2013, acrylic on panel, 11 x 14 in.
- MJ2*, 2013, acrylic on panel, 11 x 14 in.
- Colleen*, 2013, acrylic on panel, 11 x 14 in.
- Nicole*, 2013, acrylic on panel, 11 x 14 in.
- Christina*, 2013, acrylic on panel, 11 x 14 in.
- Chandler*, 2013, acrylic on panel, 11 x 14 in.
- Ron*, 2013, acrylic on panel, 11 x 14 in.
- John*, 2013, acrylic on panel, 11 x 14 in.
- Megan*, 2013, acrylic on panel, 11 x 14 in.
- Mark*, 2013, acrylic on canvas mounted on panel, 18 x 24 in.
- Amy*, 2013, acrylic, oil on canvas mounted on panel, 12 x 16 in.
- Mary Beth*, 2013, charcoal on paper, 18 x 24 in.
- Nicole*, 2013, charcoal on paper, white watercolor, 18 x 24 in.
- MJ*, 2013, charcoal on paper, white watercolor, 18 x 24 in.
- Jim*, 2013, charcoal on paper, white watercolor, 18 x 24 in.
- Labyrinth 296*, 2010-2013, ink, acrylic on panel, 18 x 24 in.



VISUAL ARTS GALLERY

SUNYADIRONDACK

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Cover image: *Labyrinth 295*, 2013, ink, acrylic on panel, 24 x 48 in.

Artwork photographed by Liz Lajeunesse  
Design by susanpearcedesign.com