

MODERN PAINTERS

Rob Wynne at Locks Gallery in Philadelphia

By PAUL LASTER, January 28, 2014

Locks Gallery, Philadelphia
Open December 6, 2013 through January 30, 2014

For his third show at the gallery in five years, Wynne constructs a metaphorical landscape with poetic objects that reference the natural elements of earth, air, water, and fire. Featuring wall sculptures made from hand-poured glass, canvases of appropriated imagery and embroidered text, and found rocks covered in diamond dust, Wynne's exhibition takes viewers into a dreamlike realm, where art-historical, literary, and spiritual forces collide.

The Lure of Unknown Regions Beyond the Rim of Experience, 2013, displays funky glass letters that whimsically tumble down the wall, spelling out an entrancing phrase from a book about a failed expedition to K2, the world's second-highest mountain. *Wave*, 2013, consisting of 1,700 pieces of poured mirrored glass, playfully riffs on the famous wood-block prints of Japanese artist Hokusai. Abstractly representing water, it is the artist's largest work to date.

A third wall contains seven different works, clusters of hundreds of unique glass butterflies with thoughtful titles like *52 Forms of Being*, 2013. The silvery butterflies symbolize air in Wynne's visual vocabulary.

Two easel-size canvases with digitally printed paintings of castles add to the narrative of an imaginary place. Sparkling with glitter, their titles—*Away*, 2004, and *In the Air*, 2009—are embroidered on the surface. A third canvas, *Flame*, 2013, appropriates fire from a painting by the French Baroque classicist Jean Restout and is embellished with diamond dust and a shimmering fabric bow. Treating the gallery like the wilderness, the artist strews dozens of rocks that are painted black and sprinkled with diamond dust across the floor. The installation of reflective stones anchors the complex canvas and glass works while marking a connection to a mystical environment—one that reads like a sublime projection from Wynne's mind.



The Lure of Unknown Regions... 2013
Hand-poured and mirrored glass, 134 x 78 inches