



Surface: Cove, June, 2008, oil on panel, 16" x 16"

ELONGATED MOMENTS

Over the past several years, artist Kristin Malin has been absorbed with capturing the surface of the water in Robinhood Cove, where she lives, just south of Bath. Working directly from nature, she sets up her easel on-site and paints *en plein air* in all seasons. Her fascination has led to an engaging series of modestly scaled paintings that function as visual haikus—concise, intuitively rendered responses to carefully observed events.

“I mostly paint from the same two or three spots,” says the artist. “The paintings are 16 by 16 inches, which are large enough to be able to paint with gestural marks, but small enough that I can get a painting done in one session. That was my aim in this series—to select a motif, capture the moment, and complete it in one session, with the same light and time of day.”

The visual motifs and interpretations that Malin derives from her subject are seemingly as inexhaustible as that of nature itself. Captivated by wind and weather, tidal activity, or the unexpected interruption of

a passing boat or bobbing bird, the artist renders their effects on the water’s surface with specificity. Describing the painting, *Surface: Cove, June*—an image with almost hypnotic wave patterns—she says, “I basically opened my eyes wide and looked, while my hand painted.”

Throughout the series, the artist emphasizes the abstract qualities of her compositions by flattening pictorial space and eliminating traditional landscape references, such as the horizon line or foreground and background. Without these visual clues, the scale of the scene is left intriguingly ambiguous. Filling the paintings from edge to edge, the momentary patterns reflected on the water’s surface straddle the line between abstraction and representation.

Claude Monet’s serial depictions of his beloved water-lily pond are an obvious, distinguished artistic forebear to Malin’s paintings. Her closely cropped compositions and expressive, physical brushwork, however, display a more contemporary aesthetic, not to mention the artist’s individuality. “Each stroke,” she says, “is a moment of seeing.” **MH+D**

Kristin Malin grew up in New Orleans and received her BFA in painting from Louisiana State University, graduating magna cum laude. She attended the New York Studio School and received her MFA from Columbia University in 1983. In 1987, Malin moved to the coast of Maine, where she continues to live and work. She is represented by the Caldbeck Gallery in Rockland.

