

## *The Semiotics of Ink and Solvent*

Surveying Shelley Thorstensen's work one finds references that range broadly from the decorative arts to systems of religious belief like Hinduism and Islam at their most theosophical. On a more personal level, her work is infused with an intense aesthetic energy and purpose embodying a kind of universalism not based on easy politics or visual rhetoric. Thorstensen's work flows out of a profound love for nature, an ever curious inquisitiveness, and an easy generosity stemming from a comfortable place where the essence of love reigns as *modus operandi*. Veins of inspiration stem from the mystical world of Persian poetry, and in particular Sufism.

Thorstensen's work evokes narrative impulses interwoven into dream-like states. The resulting designs and compositions project a complex yet ordered atmosphere that unexpectedly integrates abstraction with figurative elements. Zen-like, it strives to capture and express the intimate impression of a moment in concentrated yet sparse ways. An inkling of *satori* - some sort of revelation manifesting through meaning - line, shadow, texture, form – is discernible.

In front of the often delicate yet always powerful prints and installations, it is possible to gather a playful and refreshing sense of the totally magical and ethereal fizz we can find in the quotidian when we remain child-like, aware, and open to its relevance. There are oblique suggestions – often symbolic – sensual seductions, coded allusions, veiled allegories. Viewers can pick up on subtle nudges that tap into higher frequencies of visual synthesis. Thorstensen's work prompts us to discover cues hidden within the surface of everyday things - shadows projected, etched beyond the lines.

Anabelle Rodriguez, Guest Curator

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