

"IMAGES IN THE FOG"
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IN GUERRILLA BLOG



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Post by Barbara Cuerden

I first ran into the FogMan, Bob Cunningham, at a community barbeque on Grand Manan Island, New Brunswick. At that time he had been studying and collecting fog and acid fog samples for 65 years, reading the fog and sending his data to Bowdoin College, Massachusetts. When there was no fog, I could see his white house just away on the point from where I was staying. Under some compulsion to draw and paint air at the time, I was determined to converse with him.

Recently, seeing Jean Jewer's massive painting *Images in a Fog* at Cube Gallery called to mind a mixture of recollected images and responses. Past conversations condense and break through into the present "on little cat feet" like Carl Sandberg's fog. Lingering with it after a rainy week, I recall what Bob told me about the constituents of fog, the physics of it, how it condenses differently because of temperature, and the resulting turbulence between bottom and top layers.

Jewer layers three panels in a top-to-bottom composition that seems to record details of a lost conversation where the rain told her what it saw and the wind told her how to write it down.

Reading *Images in a Fog*, I see the sweep of Jewer's arm and shoulder in strokes across the canvas, the specific size of a brush collecting and recollecting the eruptions of that conversation. The small circular wrist movements of a human hand mark the twists and touches, turns and returns of some perhaps stormy encounters. The painting asks me what is surface and what is not-surface; above, in-between, and below. It asks me to feel again feelings aroused by childhood scribbles, rhythmic circles, and those kinds of touches testing materials and types of markings make. It also asks how it feels to be marked by something. I think of those strange Venn diagrams people use to demonstrate the intersection of two fields with the middle oval a felt overlap, the kind of shape you get when you keep scribbling loops and circles. The painting stands between Jean and the weather on the edge of a sudden transition.

Red splashes drip, an overlay marking a final surface layer blooming like water lilies trailing red roots from above to below, but not right down to the bottom. There's an etcetera quality to the boiling points circulating a sleety bottom panel, moving beyond it and into the margins.

Images in a Fog is an "emotional weather report"—and precipitation is expected. I am thinking Tom Waits, as I sit with Jean Jewer's work. The paintings are displayed monolithically, counterbalanced by the grey slab floor at Cube. But what I am actually hearing over the sound system is a perfect musical match, Keren Ann (Live Sessions), singing Chelsea Burns. I could spend the duration of a rainy afternoon here in moody atmospheric conditions, dripping, boiling, shivering, and burning.