

## **Linda Stojak: Silent Voices**

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A recipient of the Guggenheim Fellowship Award, Linda Stojak imbues her paintings with rich atmosphere and pathos. Some of her figures hover like ghosts, receding into smoky, sensuous darkness, while others are grounded in thick, lugubrious outlines that link firmly with their backgrounds.

Close observation of her surfaces of apparently monochromatic color reveals an incredible range of tonality, texture, and finely graded hue. Stojak's layered canvases of deeply textured, expressively-applied oil paint attest to a laborious process that limits her output to only a few paintings each year.

Stojak imbues her paintings with rich atmosphere and a reductive sense of suggestion and only the essential. "Linda Stojak delights in the materiality of the oil," writes art critic Michaél Amy, "a fluid medium allowing her to conjure bodies flipping back and forth between paint and the illusion of almost intangible flesh."

Rather than rooting her figures in detail, Stojak is interested in essential lines and the suggestion of volume and atmosphere. Her careful use of high-keyed color is dramatic in its restraint: reds jolting out from black and gray, or gentle, dreamlike environments of blue. These figures read not as individuals but instead as timeless specters of humanity and femininity, their facial specificity obscured. Referring to both past and present, Stojak's women are clothed in period dress and formal wear, the fabric itself sometimes unraveling to suggest impermanence, perhaps, or even the effects of time itself upon the body.

The presence of a Stojak painting is one that pushes past darkness; these figures play a part as symbols of redemption and connection in the face of their apparent isolation. She says, "My hope is for my work to help people accept the emotions in themselves."

Stojak, recipient of the Guggenheim Fellowship in 1996, has been reviewed by *Art in America* and *The New York Times*. Edward Leffingwell of *Art in America* wrote of her work, "There is something hard-won about these anxiously drawn, oddly romantic figures that in their tense grace recall the drawings of Giacometti and Rothenburg." With a master's degree from Pratt University, Stojak's acclaimed painting is included in prominent public and museum collections across the country.