

Beth Ames Swartz

Cline Fine Art

Scottsdale, Arizona

Beth Ames Swartz has been incorporating words and symbols from Kabbalah and other mystical sources in her paintings for 13 years. She uses the appropriate snippets—from sources such as the I Ching and poems by William Butler Yeats and Li Bai—as talismans to air her attempt to map the world, both interior and exterior.

In her series "Visible Reminders" (2001-2), Swartz manipulated letter with scribbles and smears so that they became nearly unrecognizable. The paintings in her new series, "The Thirteenth Moon," have the same built-up layers and luminous quality but are more representational. Here the drips and scrambled paint coalesce into skylines and landscapes, all starring the full moon. The words float closer to the surface, as if Swartz's exploration has taken on a new directness and urgency.

Several of the landscapes call to mind the work of Edvard Munch. In *The lonely light, an image of mysterious wisdom* (2006) and *All thought becomes an image* (2006), the moon emits a visible beam of light that connects it to the vague mass of land below. The silhouette of overlapping hills evokes the human body—hips, perhaps, or bent legs. In a departure from



Beth Ames Swartz, *The lonely light, an image of mysterious wisdom*, 2006, acrylic and paste on canvas, 60" x 48", Cline Fine Art

her earlier work, Swartz surrounds each image with a painted, lettered border. These "frames," like all of Swartz's art, explore both the limits of our perception and the possibilities beyond.

—Deborah Sussman Susser