

(a.k.a. Li Po), and Wang Wei, representing, respectively Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism.

Each canvas invited viewers into a mysterious and beautiful world of landscapes undisturbed by human life. The



Beth Ames Swartz, *The Thirteenth Moon: Facing Snow #3*, 2008, acrylic and multimedia on canvas, 48" x 60". ACA Galleries.

Beth Ames Swartz

ACA Galleries

Beth Ames Swartz has long explored systems of knowledge by translating philosophical concepts into esthetic visual experiences. For her recent luminous mixed-media paintings, she was inspired by three renowned eighth-century Chinese poets, Du Fu (a.k.a. Tu Fu), Li Bai

artist conveys a sense of eternity with skies that blend imperceptibly into the land and mountains. For instance, in *The Thirteenth Moon: Facing Snow #3* (2008), small splashes of white fill the sky and pour down across rugged mountains and clumps of rocks below. In the more urgent and tempestuous *Only the Mindless Waters Remain* (2008), a fast-moving river cuts through ravaged terrain while a moon hangs low over distant hills. Pale blues and rusts indicate a wintry, sunless climate.

By contrast, *Facing Snow #4* (2008) depicts a golden-orange landscape, with blotches of snow falling across a hilly, rust-colored topography, giving the sense that the viewer is looking out from inside a cave.

Although the gallery posted the poems relating to the paintings so that viewers could see the connections to the poets' different worldviews, the paintings nevertheless stood on their own. *Deer Park* (2008) looks like land's end. Painted in dark aquamarine and purple, it shows spikes of earth jutting into the sea. But these radiant paintings did not convey sadness—even when they implied times before and after human existence. Instead they transported viewers on illuminating journeys. —Valerie Gladstone