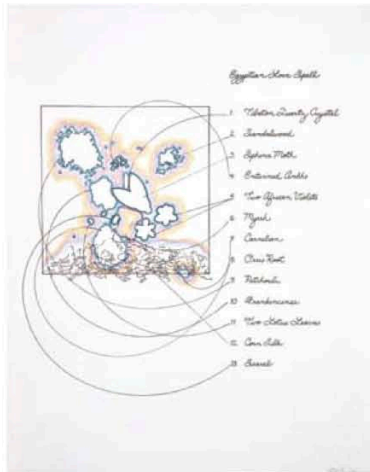


The tactile and intimate paintings of

LINDA STARK

almost ask to be read like a map, held in one's hand, stroked, or otherwise experienced sensually.



The works are characterized by rich, translucent layers of color, a smooth and luscious surface, and small objects embedded within the paint, like bugs in amber on an alien topography. Through her process she treats the paint almost as a sculptural medium, applying pigment by pouring it while methodically tilting the canvas. "[I]nspired by the observation of processes found in nature", she allows the paint to puddle and form like translucent geological strata, embedding between layers elements from nature known or considered to have medicinal or other healing qualities. The process is extremely time consuming; a single painting can take up to three years to complete. The result is a symmetrical, mandala-like painting with a distinctive, compelling welt/nipple/navel in the center and drips that hover along two of the four edges; it reflects both her conceptual interests in the body and nature, and the properties of the material itself. Works in her series "Adorned Paintings" feature two- and three-dimensional elements that represent body jewelry, bruises, and stigmata. Her recent show (Angles Gallery, 2007) of "Potion Paintings" contained paintings embedded with herbs, crystals, spices, amulets, and other materials that are believed to have magical or mystical properties when administered to oneself or another. This and earlier bodies of work are the result of Stark's ongoing interest in myth, ritual, transformation, and the notion of the divine. With their integration of paint and elements from the earth Stark's paintings serve as a bridge between artificial and natural, between nature and culture.

