

FROZEN LIGHT

K.M. GRAHAM: AN ARTIST IN THE ARCTIC

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September 24 - October 22, 2011

"In the Arctic I find that nature has been stripped down to its essential elements. That fact plus the extraordinary colour which at times seems to fill the whole Arctic world provides endless stimulation for both drawing and painting." - K.M. Graham, 1975



ARCTIC V, ARCTIC VISTA NEAR CAPE DORSET
1989, Acrylic on paper, 24 1/2 x 38 1/2 in. (62.5 x 97.8 cm)

K.M. Graham spent time in the north and south of Baffin Island and worked at the Cape Dorset workshop making lithographs and introducing the Inuit to acrylic painting.

She would sit for endless inspired hours, absorbing the Arctic vista through her large cabin window. She perceived how the vast expanse of ice and snow was transformed from subtle tints of white and pastel hues of the daytime to a spectral explosion of yellows, reds, violets and blues at sunset. The day would end with a grand symphonic night show of northern lights.

The first exhibition of the Arctic series in 1971 at the Pollock Gallery in Toronto had viewers enthralled and overwhelmed with the rapturous colour that radiated from these large stained canvases. It was the beginning of several exhibitions that were inspired by the varied aspects of the Arctic: Aurora Borealis, geological formations and patterns, dark seas with icebergs, turquoise waters with ice-flows.

The Arctic summer provided her with the Tundra of flowering pink bushes, tiny yellow flowers, and unusual rocky terrain. The winds would blow long wisps of clouds into strange shapes and looping lines from which she derived her "Arctic line" or "up and over line".

The Arctic series varies from distinctly abstract works that employ modernist innovation along with slight to moderate natural references to paintings that are obviously abstracted landscapes, which tend to dominate the later part of her artistic output.

K.M. Graham had a great gift in transforming natural subjects into a personal, modernist language. The three dimensionality of natural phenomena and the two dimensionality of painting are wonderfully fused in an openness of vibrant creativity - intuitive and free, yet ordered and disciplined. Some paintings were comprised of simple lateral stained strands of acrylic paint with a wavy drawn line of white pastel floating between the poured layers of cool to warm whites, greys, vibrant blues and earth colours. One of these works, hanging in the Art Gallery of Ontario, was admired by Helen Frankenthaler, who mentioned that she hadn't seen, up to that point in time, anybody stain with white before.

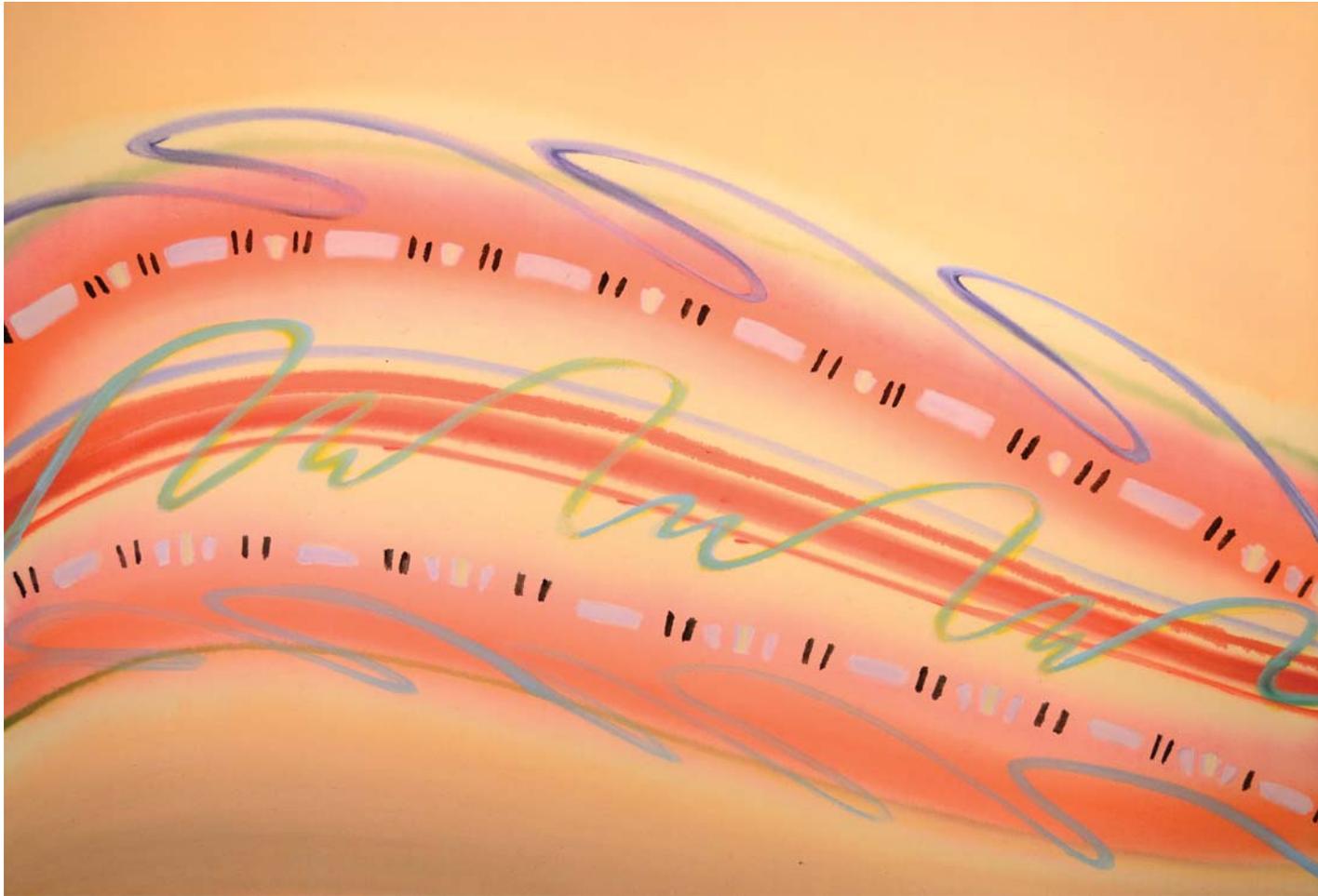
K.M. Graham captured on canvas and paper the essence and wonder of the Canadian Arctic with a truly unique and powerful visual poetry. She has left us with some of the most evocative and beautiful works of art ever produced in this country.



DORSET WHIPLASH
1978/79, Acrylic and pastel on canvas
14 x 22 in. (35.5 x 55.8 cm)

- Paul Fournier, 2011

FRONT COVER: (detail) CAPE DORSET - SPRING LIGHT 1971/99, Acrylic on Canvas, 44 x 60 in. (111.8 x 152.5 cm)



CAPE DORSET - SPRING LIGHT
1971/99, Acrylic on canvas
44 x 60 in. (111.8 x 152.5 cm)



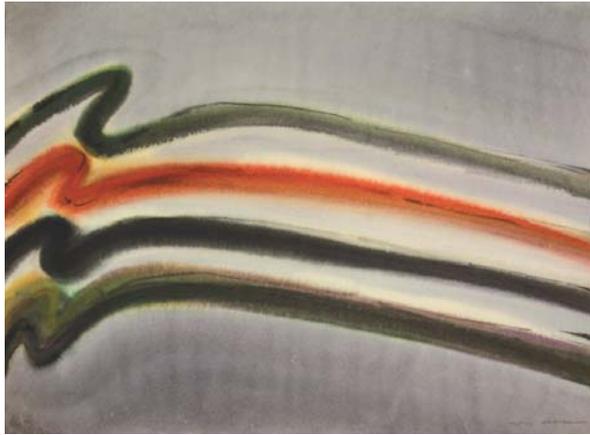
UNTITLED (BLUES 3)
1979, Acrylic on canvas
20 x 17 1/2 in. (50.8 x 44.4 cm)



UNTITLED (BLUES 1)
1979, Acrylic on canvas
27 x 13 in. (68.6 x 33 cm)

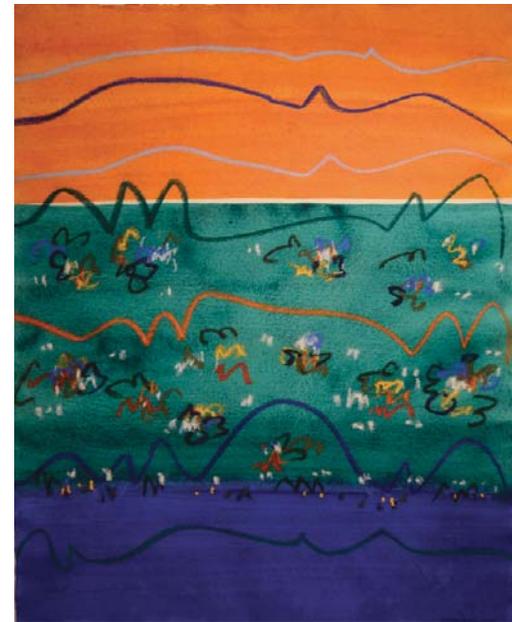


ARCTIC ICE FLOE OFF BAFFIN ISLAND
1998-99, Acrylic on canvas
32 x 59 in. (81.3 x 149.9 cm)



DORSET GREY

1979, Acrylic and pastel on paper
22 x 29 1/4 in. (55.9 x 74.3 cm)



ARCTIC IV – HIGH ARCTIC WITH FLORA

1975, Acrylic and pastel on paper
30 3/4 x 22 1/4 in. (78.1 x 56.5 cm)



UNTITLED (FOR PAUL FOURNIER)
Acrylic on canvas
34 1/2 x 57 1/2 in. (87.6 x 146.1 cm)



UNTITLED (BLUES 2)
March 1979, Acrylic on canvas
21 1/2 x 33 3/4 in. (54.6 x 85.7 cm)



ARCTIC SPRING (MOOLEEOOJA)
1987, Acrylic on canvas
50 x 60 in. (127 x 152.5 cm)



JACOB'S LADDER, SECOND ARCTIC SERIES

1973, Acrylic on canvas

78 x 34 3/4 in. (198.1 x 88.3 cm)

FRIGID SPACE, SECOND ARCTIC SERIES
1973, Acrylic on canvas
78 1/2 x 43 1/2 in. (199.5 x 110.5 cm)

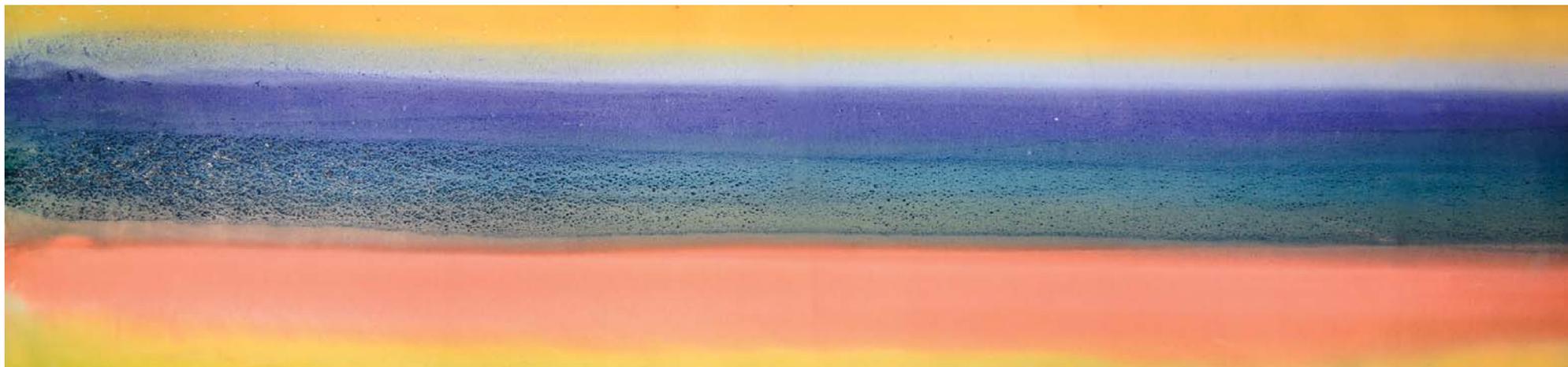




DORSET HOT
1979, Acrylic and pastel on paper
22 x 30 in. (55.9 x 76.2 cm)

ARCTIC ROCKS IN SPRING LIGHT
1979, Acrylic on prepared paper
30 x 22 in. (55.9 x 76.2 cm)

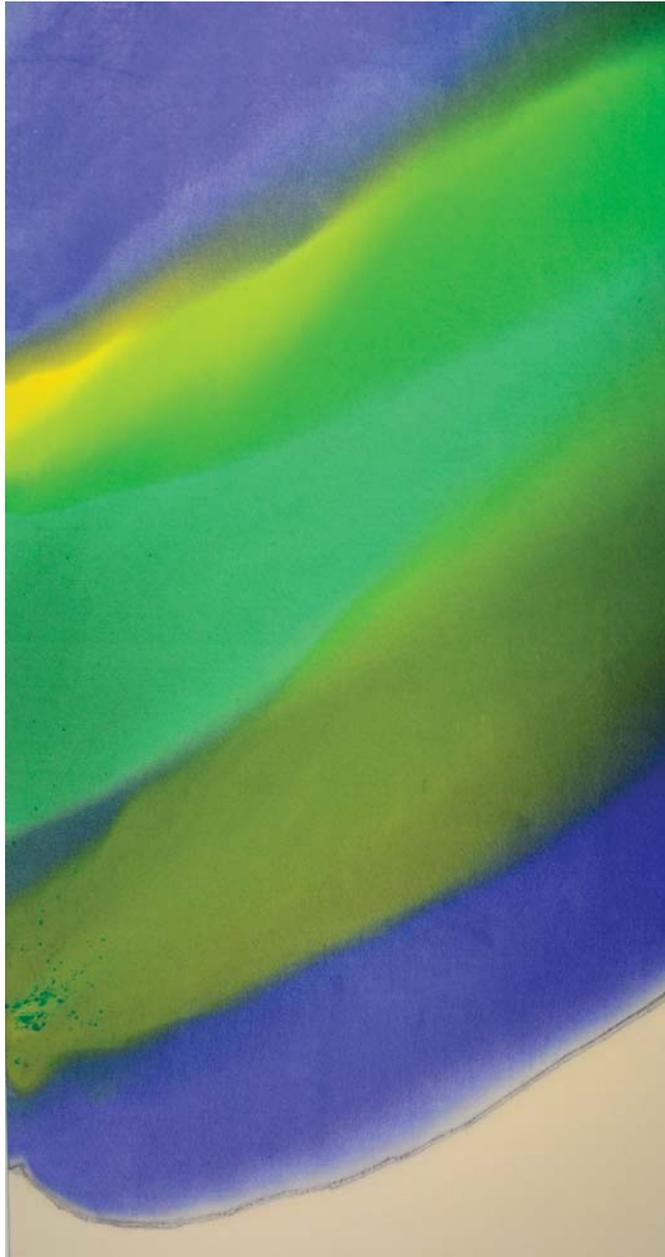




UNTITLED (PEACH, GREEN & BLUE)

Acrylic on canvas

24.5 x 90 in. (62.2 x 228.6 cm)



NIGHT HOSANNA
1973, Acrylic on canvas
77 x 44 in. (195.6 x 111.8 cm)



REVELATIONS II, ARCTIC SERIES
1971, Acrylic and pastel on canvas
39 x 45 1/2 in. (99 x 116 cm)



UNTITLED (1974)
1974, Acrylic on canvas
99 x 29 1/2 in. (251.4 x 74.7 cm)

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