

Conversation with the Past
by Jane Grau
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Conversations With Monument of the Distant Past is the title of a series of paintings by Janice Mueller at The Blue Pony Gallery...

Conversation can be intimate, a dialogue between two persons, or it can be social congress among several. As a medium to entertain and enlighten, an ideal conversation is hot, requiring cognitive and verbal agility and active participation by all parties. But the point should be that these works are not just a hyphenation between past and present but a complex, wholistic, recursive interaction where the past informs the present, informs the artist, informs the viewer, and vice-versa. The movement and the interchange, in other words, are neither linear nor finite.

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Mueller's paintings are similar to Lytle's in their simple compositions and highly-worked surfaces. But where Lytle's are embroidered, Mueller's are atmospheric. Those with blocks of colors are much like Rothko, and like Rothko, are emotionally ambiguous. So it is the "monuments" that appeal to me because of their concrete evocations of pyramids and apples, a sort of universal knowledge to which I am privy. I especially like the latter, as within the dark red orb is a passageway that leads to...who knows where?