

## Margaret Garrett- Artist Statement

My childhood was spent dancing. It was my first identity and my first mode of expression as an artist. This experience continues to inform my paintings. When I begin working on a new piece, I see the paper or canvas as an empty stage and the line as movement.

In my painting practice, there are works that are driven by rhythmic mark-making and layers of color, while there are others that are propelled by the dynamic relationships between shapes. In both of these approaches, movement is a constant driving force, and I am always tuned into the intrinsic music of each composition.

Many of my paintings begin with a drawing on the canvas. As I draw, I feel the movement of these drawings in my body. When I begin to paint, I find the shapes created from the drawing. I intuit the colors that I will use in each painting, experimenting with different colors until I feel that I have landed on the right combination. The way the shapes and colors interact is of primary importance, as I seek to create a kind of energetic beauty.

I often work in ongoing series, developing a language and following its evolution as it morphs and changes. Frequently a series will begin on paper, which is a faster medium in which to capture the initial spark of inspiration. At some point, I may try the idea that I have been exploring on paper on a canvas. The works in the two different media are related but each have their own character and weight. I consider the pieces on paper to be independent paintings and not just studies for larger paintings.

In 2017, I started dancing again, filming myself dancing and using clips from that footage to create choreographed, collaged videos. Initially, this endeavor began as a quest to find new shapes for my paintings, but it quickly evolved into a renaissance of my first love, dance, and a discovery of a way to incorporate that into my art. I have become fascinated with the visual language that emerges from this combination of technology and the moving body. In these pieces, I use the body as a paintbrush to draw and create shapes. Then, I use the filmic editing process to ‘choreograph’ what essentially becomes a visual collage. In my videos, I am working with the same compositional elements as in my paintings - linear movement, color, shape, rhythm, and the unfolding of contrapuntal patterns.