

## Fred Gutzeit



### Recommended by Catherine Fosnot

Exceptional art and the genius behind it can often provide precursory insights—premonitions, if you will—into the way the world really is structured in contrast to the way it can be perceived given the neurological structure of our ocular system. It enables us to “come to know” more than we can see; it enables us to go beyond our “lived” experiences. For example, Seurat’s chromoluminarism and pointillism explored light as photons with a particle/wave duality, causing the viewer to have to make sense of the vibrations of color—a process perhaps now best understood through quantum mechanics. Although he began as a landscape painter, Gutzeit, like Seurat, has never been satisfied with capturing the realism we “see” in nature. He has continually sought a realism through abstraction that would capture the hidden complexity of nature juxtaposed with the search for structure. Musings about complexity and chaos theories, string theory, mathematics modeling, and current scientific speculation about “multiverses” are employed as he explores consciousness, identity, and structure. His bold uses of color and dimensionality are wondrous and aesthetically pleasing allowing us to travel into the cosmos of his world, yet they can also at times be incongruous and sometimes even jarring—much like the universe (or multiverses) we live in. In his SigNature series, Gutzeit explores line and brushstrokes—signatures—to understand human consciousness and identity against a background of complexity. Lynn Maliszewski in her review of Gutzeit’s work for *The Brooklyn Rail* (2014) perhaps said it best, “Gutzeit knows that even abstract renditions of reality link to observations. His attempt to render the murky sandpits of identity through abstract means relies on thought rather than chance. He captures an essence, as inexplicable as first impressions or body language, through sinuous form and fervent mayhem. We should be demanding as much from abstract painting.”

*Catherine Fosnot, Fall 2020*

## **Bio**

Fred Gutzeit has lived and worked on the Lower East Side of Manhattan for over 40 years. He has been the recipient of Pollack-Krasner Foundation Awards 3 times, as well as fellowships from the Vermont Studio Center, the Soaring Gardens Artists' Retreat in PA, and the Helliker-Lahotan Foundation on Cranberry Isle, ME. Gutzeit holds a BFA from the Cleveland Institute of Art and an MFA from Hunter, City University of NY, and has been an adjunct professor at CCNY since 1993. Among the public places that his "Nature" Landscape and "Nature" Abstraction paintings have been exhibited are the Mansfield Art Center in Ohio, the Conde Naste Building Lobby on Times Square, and the Rodale Building Lobby in Midtown Manhattan. In 2010, he began a series of drawings from signatures—using first and last initials, developing them over the years into watercolors, acrylic panels, large paintings on canvas, digital prints and currently 100 new watercolors. An amalgam of some of the initial drawings became a 13 foot square billboard wall work mounted on the facade of the Sideshow Gallery in Brooklyn in 2012. To date he has done "SigNature" solo exhibitions at Tregoning Gallery in Cleveland, Ohio, Brian Morris Gallery, Pratt Manhattan, and VanDerPlas Gallery in New York, among others. A number of these works have also been in numerous juried group shows in New York and around the country including the Butler Biennial in Youngstown, Ohio.

## **Artist Statement**

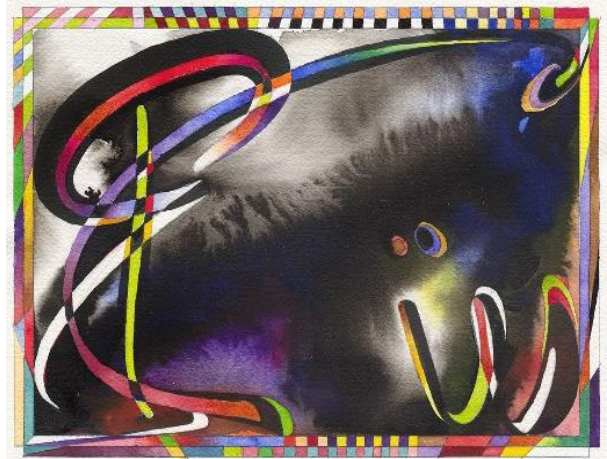
My current decade of artwork is about identity and my overriding concern is to give "Form" to my artwork. Our signatures are self-portraits. Grafitti and tags are stylized signatures. This personal calligraphy is to me a sign of consciousness. It's the ego fit to the limit of the body—the character of our handwriting. I say "Sig-Nature", because, in this body of work, I've put a human "touch" to the landscape—nature transformation that I had been involved with previously, for more than 10 years—"nature" to "human nature." Musings about quantum mechanics, string theory, and current scientific speculation about multiverses, brought me to wonder about consciousness. How could I represent human consciousness in thinking about nature? It seemed like I was looking for...human-nature! All my life, in my artwork, I've in some way included "line." "Unfolding" is my guiding idea as I create a body of work. It involves making sense of and shaping "findings." This spirit of evolution includes synthesizing ideas and images from my past work, yet to build on the "unexpected." This has translated into the "found object" for me, objects in the past as motifs for painting such as a discarded timeclock, work gloves, link fences, sidewalk section, sitting dogs, landscape sites, Calabi-Yau manifolds, and currently, "SigNatures." My job is seeing "Form" as poetry in my "findings."



*Fred Gutzeit, Sig Whiz, Vector Prints Signed and Numbered*



*Fred Gutzeit 2011, AllSig. Watercolor on Paper 22"x20" framed*



*Fred Gutzeit 2018 DASig, EKSig, TRSig, Watercolors on Paper framed*



*Fred Gutzeit (left to right) JFSig, GNSig, LGSig. Watercolors on Paper framed*



*Fred Gutzeit (top left, to right, to bottom), LKSig, CLSig, and JKSig. Watercolors on Paper framed*