

Katharine Harvey – “*Threshold*” – *Queen’s Quarterly* Fall 2019 issue

Paris burning. How is it that, in a professed secular country like France, the fire at Notre Dame Cathedral brought citizens together in unfathomable despair? Made tangible in stony edifices, coloured light, and vaulting arches, yearning shimmers darkly, far beneath the consciousness of many in our pragmatic contemporary world.

Katharine Harvey’s new painting series, *Threshold*, turns to the spheres of wonder at the foundation of human insight. Our religious imagination, though vastly diverse from people to people, nevertheless binds through a common desire for the hidden, the unknown, and the luminous. The artist has rekindled a fascination stirred over decades in her studies of the jewel tones in Tibetan monasteries and medieval icons, and the dazzle of festival lights. She now turns her gaze upward to the starry canopies, ornamental lamps, coffered ceilings, and frescoed domes of more than 45 local and distant sacred sites to explore how Buddhists, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Indigenous peoples, and Christians have sought to reach beyond the thoughts and ways that limit their understandings of the universe and one another. Included is a new work on the clerestory windows and chandeliers of Notre Dame, based on the artist’s numerous sketches and photographs collected over years. Abstracting this and many other traditions’ architectural metaphors through the medium of paint, Katharine Harvey layers and offsets colour, shadow, and form to create the light and movement that is emblematic of her work. Her radiant images seek to express the provocative ineffability of sacred space, an ambient vitality that disrupts the mundane and the doctrinal, and works to calm the pitched voices of intolerance. Katharine Harvey’s *Threshold* glimpses the quiet, revolutionary potential of a collective humanity.

- **PAULA PRYCE**

KATHARINE HARVEY’s exhibition history includes public artwork at Quartz Condominiums (Concord CityPlace, Toronto) and shows at the Canadian Embassy in Washington, DC, Skulpturenprojekt (Stade, Germany), First Canadian Place (Toronto), Bank of America (Los Angeles), World Financial Center (New York), and Monterey Bay Aquarium (California). Having received a BFA from Queen’s University (1986) and an MFA from the University of Victoria (1996), she lives and works in Toronto. Nicholas Metivier Gallery in Toronto and Galerie Borchardt in Hamburg, Germany, represent the artist’s work (see katharineharvey.com, metiviergallery.com, and galerie-borchardt.de).

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