

# ARTnews

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## Reviews: New York

### Sky Pape

June Kelly

For her elegant exhibition “Time Being,” abstract artist Sky Pape created expressive works on paper using a combination of Sumi ink, water, gouache, and Flashe acrylic paint, applied with homemade brushes and palm fronds. The 2012–13 series shown here was based on Pape’s exploration of the figure eight, which, on its side, is the symbol for infinity. For the artist, it serves as a rich metaphor for the unpredictable, albeit poetic, flow of life.

Each black-and-gray curved pathway was also a never-ending Möbius strip. The 13 works, which ranged in size from 30 by 22 inches to 75 by 51½ inches, were studies in graceful movement and serenity. Pape’s uneven, watered-down inky swirls were like two-dimensional representations of a contemplative dance. Her titles, such as *Blue Yonder*, *Begin Anywhere*, *One Fine Day*, *Often On*, *Curled and Unfurled*, and *Solitary Walk*, read like the diary entries of a transient everyman, each resounding with existential wisdom and enduring hope.

The strong physical presence of the familiar figure “8” dominating each creation was underscored and animated by areas of vibrant color, often in the “holes” or “eyes” of the image. Spaces were filled in with baby blue and framed by a magenta border, for example, or circles of orange and cerulean blue occupied the center of the loops. What might have become an exercise in austere abstraction was, in Pape’s hands, an example of expressive and lively art making, somehow celebratory yet born of a certain solemnity. In challenging the way we perceive the brushstroke—its nuance and limitless power—Pape makes painting seem that much more magical.—**Doug McClemon**



Sky Pape, *Cauldron*, 2012, Sumi ink, water, Flashe, and gouache on paper, 75" x 51½". June Kelly.