

**Joan Thorne****Sideshow**

The ten huge works in Joan Thorne's show at times took on more than a dozen colors, each activated by intricate and unruly patterns. The kinetic, transformative quality of the sea seemed like a perfect touchstone for the work in this lively exhibition.

Thorne's densely packed paintings (all 2013) appeared to writhe, shake, and swirl as if following or trying to retrace the artist's steps. Viewing these pictures was at times dizzying, like pursuing a slippery, living thing. *Naga* most conjured the sea's environment, with its out-pouring of blue lines and swirls competing for dominance as they crash into or swoosh beneath one another. Stray lines of gold and purple intersect the picture, and the outer edges reveal bright-green-striped segments that clash entirely, a motif the painter revisited in many of these paintings. Many of the lines in *Naga* and the other works suggest a nonspecific alphabet, giving the paintings a literary bent.

In *Bagan*, a pattern of lavender and purple zigzags is overlain with a wider ones of seafoam green; on top of that, a tense and wiry burnt-red line snakes over the canvas, which itself reveals a sliver of gold emerging from the left. The sheer quantity of color and energy could be exhausting, but never boring in such expansive canvases. *Orchia* almost coalesces into a wave as robust orange, yellow, and brown swirls collapse in on themselves amid a violent sea and sky. Viewers couldn't help feeling overpowered by the movement inherent in piecing together the drama of the images.



Joan Thorne. *Bagan*, 2013, oil on canvas, 69" x 65" Sideshow

—Ali Pechman