



ELIZABETH HIGGINS

# Innate Inspiration

**G**rowing up in Canada, in Toronto, Elizabeth Higgins drew wherever and whenever she could. Her father intended for her to become a doctor but one day she stopped at the door of the art studio in her high school and was captured. She saw the other girls listening to classical music and making art. The teacher invited her to audit the class and sent her to night school to study art. Today with degrees in art from Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario,

and Parsons School of Design in New York, she creates paintings and monotypes of colorful, minimal beauty.

An exhibition, *Elizabeth Higgins - New Monotypes*, will be shown at George Billis Gallery in New York, May 2 through 31.

Having studied with Leland Bell, Paul Resika and the Canadian master print maker J.C. Heywood, and having admired artists from 19<sup>th</sup>-century French masters to the figurative artists of the San Francisco

Bay Area, Higgins has avoided becoming a product of their influence and produces art that is uniquely hers. She recounts the advice of Philip Guston who wrote, "Studio Ghosts: When you're in the studio painting, there are a lot of people in there with you—your teachers, friends, painters from history, critics...and one by one, if you're really painting, they walk out. And if you're really painting, *you* walk out."

When she first went to the Art Gallery of



1  
*Hydrangeas #6*,  
monotype, 12 x 12"

2  
*Woman at Window*  
#2, monotype,  
12 x 9"

3  
*Morning Light*,  
monotype with  
watercolor, 11 x 17"

4  
*Hydrangeas #9*,  
monotype, 12 x 12"



2



3



4

Ontario, she was impressed by the poetic simplicity of the bronzes and original plasters donated to the museum by the British sculptor Henry Moore.

In her exhibition are three monotypes of an arrangement of hydrangeas she saw in the home of a friend. "I was struck by the composition and the light," she explains. "I stopped and took it in and was inspired. I did some sketches and decided to pursue the motif.

"I don't analyze," she continues. "I react to the landscape or the scene. I react to the quality of the light, the play of shadow and light, and the light's ethereal quality. I make a spiritual connection." When asked about her process, she replied briefly but revealingly, "It's innate. I just do it."

Her son William, then a law student at Fordham University, once said to her, "What would the world be like without art and artists, Mom? It would be a wasteland." He also introduced her to the music and poetry of fellow Canadian, Leonard Cohen who wrote, "There is a crack, a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in." William died tragically on Christmas day in 2018. It was art that slowly let the light back in to Higgins' life. ●

**George Billis Gallery** 527 W. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10011 • (212) 645-2621  
[www.georgebillis.com](http://www.georgebillis.com)