

For those of you who have a yen to circulate in outer space and tune into the shimmering wonders of nature and the universe, try Margaret Garrett's paintings.

For more than a decade, Ms. Garrett has been working miracles in her studio, making visible on canvas and paper what might be called the dance of the universe, with its rhythms and eruptions of energy, immersed in an expansive and luminous space.

It is not surprising that Ms. Garrett has tuned into the magic of dance. From her childhood in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, she was a dedicated ballerina. At age 16, she was performing with the Pennsylvania Ballet and two years later became a soloist with the Cleveland Ballet. But by the ripe age of 21, she was "done with it."

Though she continued to do stints in films and plays and choreographed for theatrical productions, she was increasingly drawn to art, studying painting privately with the artist, Feidt Thorpe, in New York, and drawing at the Art Students League. And from the beginning, her art expressed itself in abstract terms of line and color, like the gestures and emotions of dance.

As she explains it, "I see line as movement. Texture, form, the way that colors interact, are all different manifestations of motion and energy."

But the vibrations and atmospheric colors of her paintings are also powerfully suggestive of forms and conditions of

nature. And no wonder. The artist's studio is surrounded by waving reeds and grasses, twisting trees and the gleaming sea and sky beyond. Though her imagery is removed from the specificity of such effects, the paintings often seem to clue into them. They glow and vibrate, and the sinuous lines are suggestive, much like the indecipherable yet expressive calligraphy of ancient Chinese paintings (which have in fact inspired Ms. Garrett).

From her tiny ink drawings on vellum to the five-foot oil paintings on canvas, Margaret Garrett has created her own wondrous universe of mystery and beauty.

– Dorothy Seiberling, April 2008