

Elizabeth Nelson, Artist Statement

### Symbolic Landscapes of the I Ching

In January 2012, I started a series of "Symbolic Landscapes" inspired by the sixty four hexagrams of the I Ching. Incorporating chance even into the procedure, I threw coins to choose a hexagram each time I started a painting and then contemplated the result as I thought or dreamt an image. When the series was finished, it was the first time I had seen the paintings in numerical sequence.

My work has always referenced the landscape of northern New England and this series continues that exploration, but with an extra dimension of symbols and geometric juxtapositions.

*I Ching* or *Book of Changes* is at least 2500 years old, and was originally used as an oracle. The eight trigrams were conceived as images of the continual transitions in heaven and on earth for a total of sixty-four signs. There is the suggestion for right action for each situation. This allows the individual to share in shaping fate; making it possible to influence the tyranny of events.

It is also a book of wisdom. Change is perceived as the continuous transformation of the one force into the other and as a cycle of connected phenomena subject to the universal law, Tao. Every event in the visible world is the effect of an image, an idea, in the unseen world. The immutable, eternal law is at work; everything is connected. In discerning the seeds of things to come, perhaps we can foresee the future and understand the past.

Hexagram translations are from *I Ching or Book of Changes*, The Richard Wilhelm translation rendered into English by Cary F. Baynes, Bollingen Series XIX, Pantheon Books. 1950