

Guggenheim Committee:

Suppose Joan Mitchell had committed her vision to canvas in the 1990s, rather than the 1950s. She would be accorded less attention and probably fewer sales. Would she be less talented? Less deserving of support? Or suppose Cy Twombly had created his masterworks in the 1920s. Would they have been greeted with anything other than scorn and disbelief?

These thoughts come to mind in contemplating the work of Jamie Dalglish, a painter uniquely, wonderfully -- and perhaps painfully -- out of step with his times. My note is to urge your close consideration of his application for a Guggenheim.

Dalglish's paintings, many of them rendered on multiple wood panels that can be randomly reorganized, are at once relentlessly non-figurative and yet a complete departure from any of the abstractionist styles associated with the New York School of the '40s and '50s or its latterday revivals.

The work, which plays with rhythmic patterning and subtle juxtapositions of color, is also intensely complex. Much of it is quite beautiful -- an incidental virtue.

I have followed Jamie's output for decades, both during my many years in New York and now from the perspective of voluntary exile in New Orleans and Mexico. He has faced extraordinary personal challenges, somehow without ever losing focus on paintings that remain rigorously disciplined and trenchantly original.

My bona fides are those of a journalist and book writer, not a visual artist. I shared two Pulitzer Prizes for team coverage of Hurricane Katrina and am the author of non-fiction books -- *Breach of Faith* (Random House) and *Desire Street* (Farrar Straus & Giroux) -- which have been honored by, among others, the American Bar Association and the Mystery Writers of America (finalist for "The Edgar," 2006).

If I can be of further assistance in your evaluation of Mr. Dalglish's application, don't hesitate to get in touch.