

Louise LeBourgeois: Towards Horizon, Towards Abstraction

Review by Catherine Nueva España

Droste Effect

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Water: Moon Glow #513, oil on panel, 46" x 46", 2013

Lake Michigan, the vast subject of Louise LeBourgeois' painting series *Toward Horizon*, is the second largest lake in the United States, with such a large surface area that it often feels like open water, with an endless horizon. Though it might be a familiar landscape to many Americans, particularly for its summer culture or proximity to Chicago (where the artist resides), Ms. LeBourgeois

manages to make the familiar enigmatic, with her abstraction of the lake's distinctive qualities and her finishing with glossy, polished canvases. It is easy to see why it is a compelling subject and a source for inspiration and fascination. In *Towards Horizon*, one feels her impulse to capture the more elusive and abstract qualities of a very famous subject. The familiar is defamiliarized. In *Water Moon Glow*, she catches that fleeting moment when the moon, like the sun, exposes the color spectrum in the water; in *Winter Beach* and *Heat Transfer*, she notices not just waves, but the movement of water from one state to another – the spectrum of a water cycle, if you will, with all its intermediate states. In some sense, these water landscapes could be from anywhere, studies of light, movement and transition that happen around us daily without our noticing. But, taken together as a group, the paintings provide a precise narrative and point of view of Lake Michigan.

Louise LeBourgeois, *Towards Horizon*, Dolby Chadwick Gallery, San Francisco, through 26 April 2014.