



VOICE OF FIRE 2006

Jeremy Owen Turner

September 16 - November 5, 2006

Visit the Voice of Fire 2006 website:

www.voiceoffire.blogspot.com

"Painting, like passion, is a living voice which, when I hear it, I must let it speak, unfettered." - Barnett Newman, MOMA's 'New American Painting' exhibition catalogue, 1959.



Artist Statement

Based on this quote, it appears to be the case that American Abstract Expressionist/Colour field painter, Barnett Newman believed his art was truly alive and had a sublime sentient voice all its own. Newman insisted his artwork had all of the autonomous aesthetic authority necessary to speak directly to the art viewer about its existence without the aid of an interpreter or critic.

In the 21st century, one particular painting of his, *"The Voice of Fire"* (1967) has finally come to life in the literal sense. The original Voice of Fire is a very tall and vertical Red Stripe (avatar) in the middle of a pure blue field (virtual space).

The Voice of Fire will appear in avatar form online and will be available in the TechLab of the Surrey Art Gallery to chat candidly and heroically with the gallery audience about everything from art theory to casual gossip and even its controversial tenure at the National Gallery of Art in Ottawa. The Voice of Fire will also be giving an Artist Talk about his present life in Cyberspace and more generally, about the evolution of abstract painting.

Unlike his original painting incarnation, this new and improved online Voice of Fire will inhabit a fully interactive cyberspace environment where up to 19 other avatar participants could occupy the blue-field and provide their own virtual commentary about the existence this living and speaking art-entity.

Jeremy Turner is rumoured to be the offline Voice behind the Voice of Fire. During the performance sessions, Turner will transform into the Voice of Fire in both personality and virtual presence. Turner will be "in character" and will allow the Voice of Fire to improvise his answers to the gallery audience based on the writings of the Voice's original creator, Barnett Newman.

Acknowledgements:

Artist and Performer: Jeremy Turner

Avatar and Room Designer: Dominic Peters (Techworlds)

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