

VISUAL ARTS

in *Mystery*, a lovely hanging decision. Part of the reason these white-on-black pieces jump out is, of course, the value of negative on positive, but it's also a very Zen acceptance of what comes with large strokes of paint — splatters. Tanahashi's splatters combine spontaneity and the awareness of deeply ingrained patterns; the arc of the white drops look like the follow-through of a basketball player's hand after she shoots the ball. In other words, they're both unique and a result of hours of repeated practice.

Those hours, the repeated movement and the controlled nature of this powerful gesture, emerge as the melding of tradition and invention with Tanahashi's Zen circles. Traditionally, these circles — or Enso — would be painted in a single stroke, often one a day, with black paint on a white background. The style of an artist reveals his or her state of mind at the time of the painting. Circles can be open or closed, as the artist desires; an open circle might represent something quite different, spiritually speaking, from a closed circle. But the circles have almost always been black.

Tanahashi's circles don't know the word "black." There's one called *Metal* that shines gold, silver and metallic blue. A red circle — titled, like most of them, *Miracles of Each Moment* — leaps from white paper. And a bright blue, purple and green circle particularly disturbed White Lotus owner Hue-Ping Lin at first. Then she heard the artist speak at the Eugene Zendo, where he explained why he opened



Left to right: *Miracles of Each Moment* (blue), *Compassion, Enjoyment, Miracles of Each Moment* (red) and *One*

the tradition to new ways of thinking. Lin told me that Tanahashi discussed the combination of discipline and freedom. Indeed, not only his many *Miracles* but also his leaping, squirming fish-like half-circle, *Light Within*, provide glorious examples of this melding.

Most of Tanahashi's paintings glow with exuberance and flexibility, discipline and joy, care in preparation and freedom in execution. Take your time with this show; you might think you understand it all at first glance, but a bit of meditation and contemplation can bring deeper rewards. **EW**

"Brush Mind" runs through March 4 at White Lotus Gallery, 767 Willamette, open 10 am to 5:30 pm Tues. through Sat. Tanahashi's website (www.brushmind.net) has more info about his practice, translation of Zen works and his work for peace.

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