

ARTIST PAULINE SIPLE

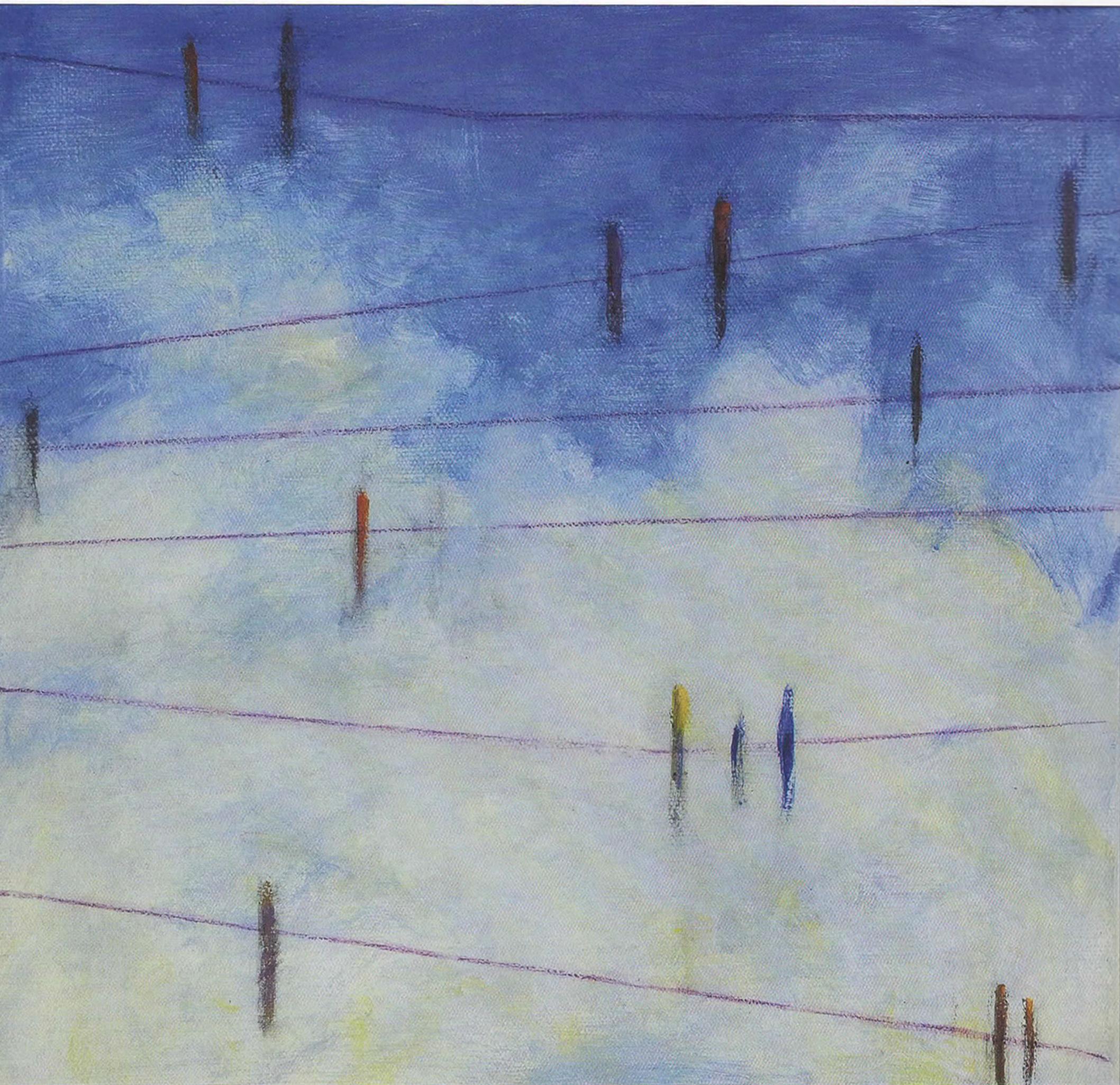
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# Universal Truths

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INTRIGUED BY THE "HOW," NOT THE "WHY" | BY DONNA CEDAR-SOUTHWORTH

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Pauline Siple

Ever wonder why birds sit on telephone lines and power wires? According to Miyoko Chur, director of communications for the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology in an article in *The New York Times*' science section, it's because "many birds like a view from the highest vantage point possible, and wires provide a convenient perch." The article is appropriately titled "Bird's-Eye View."

But when abstract painter Pauline Siple contemplates birds sitting on telephone lines, she is not interested in the "why." Rather, she is totally intrigued by the "how." How the birds were placed, how they grouped themselves, how three might be together and

one be cast alone off to the side. Were they communicating? Were they socializing? What was the pecking order of things up there? One day while sitting at a red light, she observed the birds on a line and had an idea. She quickly sketched it out, rushed to her studio and began to embark on what would become her most popular series of paintings to date, *Birds on a Line*.

A fan of Zen master and author of the bestselling book *The Miracle of Mindfulness*, Thich Nhat Hanh, Pauline was impressed by his observation that the role of the artist is to tell universal truths. Still, she was surprised by the overwhelmingly positive response to her *Birds on a Line*.