

FROELICK GALLERY

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Winds of Menelaus, July / August 2011

As humans, we have a fascinating capacity to visualize mathematics. Our analytical concepts can be rendered visually in our minds, written down in notation, and then shared as a logical and visual language for others. These creative ideas are timeless and universal - and the world I explore while painting.

My principal areas of interest at present include the ancient Greek mathematicians Euclid of Alexandria, also known as The Father of Geometry, and Menelaus of Alexandria, the first to discover spherical trigonometry. Euclid wrote the remarkable treatise *Optics* (280 BC), in which he documents his discovery of the geometry of vision. In his treatise *Sphaerica* (98 AD), Menelaus advanced trigonometry by developing a spherical triangle with three arcs of great circles on the surface of a sphere. In these paintings, I explore the ideas in *Optics* and *Sphaerica*, and formulate my own personal narrative with the geometric forms.

Menelaus lived in Alexandria, then sailed to Rome. On his voyage, if he looked up, he would have seen the inside of the sails, billowed with wind, a geometric form identical to the spherical triangles he discovered.

Euclid gave us plane geometry. Menelaus billowed those triangles, puffed wind into the sails, and revolutionized geometry by wrapping triangles around spheres; he gave us spherical trigonometry and a new way to think about astronomy.

If breath is wind, the combustion of life, and sails the spherical triangles, then death is slack, the sails gone limp, forever floating rudderless.

In these paintings I am connecting the great circles' ratios of Menelaus, with the ratios of breath/no breath: position, time, movement, scale.

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