

### **Artist Statement: Phosphorescent Migration**

There is a symbiotic connection between creative and destructive forces evident throughout nature and reflected in the process of making paintings. The tension between these two forces is an underlying theme in Schuster's work. Following the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001 Schuster's work shifted its focus to natural and manmade disasters. While working on paintings of the Gulf Oil Spill she was inspired by images of the ocean floor and drawn to the deepest regions that are nearly inaccessible to humans. It is in this last remaining wilderness that scientists believe life originated and it is still inhabited by creatures who personify our primal animal drives we try so hard to contain. The "Phosphorescent Migrations" series was inspired by images of bioluminescent organisms called phytoplankton or dinoflagellates who live on the ocean or lake floor and migrate each night to the surface of the water flaunting their own light and creating an eerie and magical effect in the dark night water. These phosphorescent organisms are as immaterial as matter gets and their lack of substance or body make them ideal subjects for painting since their appearance and the light they emit is equivalent to a stroke of paint making it possible for the paint to stand for what it represents without the need for rendering. A single stroke can sum up the phytoplankton and many intentional strokes show the patterns of movement as they make their daily pilgrimage from the bottom of the lake or sea to the surface. The dinoflagellates' diurnal journey to light the dark is a metaphor of mythic proportions and parallels the painter's effort to bring light to the surface of the painting.