

Susan Eley
Fine Art

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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A Sense of Place:
New Work by Rachel Burgess & James Isherwood
February 28-April 11, 2019



Opening Reception: Thursday February 28, 6-8pm

Susan Eley Fine Art is pleased to present ***A Sense of Place: New Work by Rachel Burgess & James Isherwood***, opening on Thursday, February 28, with a reception from 6-8 pm, and remaining on view through April 11. The exhibition features monotypes by Rachel Burgess and paintings on wood panel and paper by James Isherwood.

This exhibition is Burgess's second one at SEFA, following the success of ***In the Meeting of Rock and Sea*** (2017). Her work has been featured with SEFA at the REVEAL Art Fair in Saratoga Springs, NY (2018); and at Art Toronto (2018).

Isherwood, a Gallery Artist since 2008, has been featured in many group and two-person exhibitions at SEFA, including ***Finding Arcadia*** (2008), ***Architectural Musings*** (2012) and ***Elements of Domesticity*** (2014), along with art fairs in Miami, Toronto and New York. Most recently, a suite of his paintings hung in ***Winter Selects Silvermine***, a group show guest-curated by Susan Eley at the Silvermine Arts Center, New Canaan, CT (2019).

ABOUT RACHEL BURGESS

The coastal landscapes of Maine have been the main source of inspiration for Rachel Burgess for many years. Burgess's ongoing fascination with how land meets water—along rivers, lakes and the seaside—fuels the creation of her stunning, expressive painterly monotypes.

Burgess's landscapes are spare, punctuated by an occasional house or lighthouse. Trees and bushes sometimes line the coastal edges, but they are not the main attraction, which is always where the water meets the uninterrupted horizon line, where grassy green melts seamlessly into watery edges.

Gradations of subtle colors—pinks to blues to warm yellows—underscore the impressionistic views the artist captures, first in sketches and sometimes years later when she revisits particular images from her many sketchbooks.

Working from these sketchbooks at the printing studio, Burgess applies oil-based ink to plexiglass plates. There are no brushes. The artist uses rollers, Q-tips, tarlatan, paper towels and bits of cardboard to apply, remove and reapply colors. The creation of the image must be accomplished in a day because the ink dries quickly. The pulling of the print, which takes a few minutes, is followed by a wiping away of the image from the plate. While the painting on the plate is erased, it is reclaimed on paper, as a memory may fade but reappear at a later time in another context.

A Sense of Space includes diptychs and single panel prints in color, and two small monotypes in black and white.

ABOUT JAMES ISHERWOOD

In James Isherwood's recent landscapes, elements are rarely as expected. Skies are bright pink or yellow, the grass is not always green and the mountain ranges can be neon orange. In these enigmatic paintings Isherwood has found a place where fantasy and reality merge to create a third zone, led by imagination and memory.

An Isherwood landscape might evoke the memory of a real place, tickle the feeling of a hillside or a pool of water. Yet, these are impossible, surreal scenes, built up with fragmented, architectural structures, set in otherworldly landscapes; yet compositions are utterly harmonious with elements, man made and natural, all in synch. Painter Rene Magritte comes to mind in the clean edges of fantastic tree lines, silhouetted against night skies, populated with a density of tiny stars.

In previous series, the architectural structures were the main characters, often looming large in the foreground. In 2018 Isherwood was a recipient of the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Robert Johnson Fellowship in Amherst, Virginia. While in rural Virginia, views of vast fields, hills and mountains impacted the artist's viewpoint and ultimately found their way into his marvelous new series of paintings. In this latest work, the architectural elements hide within the folds of a field or foothills of a mountain. As always, there is an absence of people, but traces of humanity are ever present.

Isherwood's formidable technique used to create these multi-layered paintings consists of applying hundreds of layers of acrylic paint with brushes, palette knife, old CD cases, fingers, rubber scrapers and print rollers that in turn are scraped away and reapplied. Some plains are opaque and flat, whereas other areas boast complex texture and pattern.

GALLERY HOURS: Monday-Thursday, 11am-5pm and by appointment