

Susan Eley
Fine Art

Landscapes of Transcendence
An Exhibition in Two Parts

Part I: *Magical Realism*
December 14, 2023 - January 28, 2024
Opening Reception: December 16, 5-7PM

Part II: *Scenes of Ethereality*
February 1 - March 24, 2024
Opening Reception: February 3, 5-7PM

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Susan Eley Fine Art, Hudson

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“Be Clearly Aware of the Stars and Infinity on High”
–Vincent Van Gogh

Since time immemorial artists have depicted their environs through a myriad of lenses: a realistic approach, recording as objectively as possible what is perceived; to an imaginative approach, using a real scene as a catalyst for the artist’s intuitive expression of place.

In *Landscapes of Transcendence*, SEFA explores the latter, more subjective interpretations of place in a two-part exhibition at our Hudson Gallery, showcasing a variety of styles and techniques.

Part I, entitled *Magical Realism*, features paintings that evoke surrealism and fantasy. Experienced together, these scenes depict lush, at times overgrown, flora and fauna; hyperreal, saturated colors and otherworldly narratives; and impossible architecture, defying laws of gravity and physics. The artists featured in this exhibition are Karin Bruckner, Jim Denney, Katharine Dufault, Laurie Fader, Allison Green, Kentaro Hiramatsu, James Isherwood, April Dawn Parker, Lily Prince and Ulla Scheinemann.

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In *Magical Realism*, there are compositional and color commonalities across this diverse array of artists. The exhibition presents Bruckner's asymmetrical structures, Denney's focus on natural processes, Dufault's calm outdoor observations, Fader's imagined gardens, Green's celestial interpretation, Hiramatsu's deconstructed buildings, Isherwood's technicolor dreamscapes, Parker's recreations of cathedral windows, Prince's vibrant scenes of "American Beauty" and Scheinemann's richly detailed paintings of women in nature.

Everything is recognizable, yet the artists elevate their aesthetic to fulfill fantasy. Vivid palettes often become otherworldly—and visitors to the exhibition will ask themselves: why do people paint like that? *Magical Realism* introduces a view of the world that exists around us, but that we may have not yet paused to thoroughly contemplate, to interpret.

Magical Realism, as glimpsed through Western art history, is reflected in Henri Rousseau in his tropical gardens, Paul Gauguin in his idyllic Tahitian environs, Vincent Van Gogh in his swirling skies, Frida Kahlo in her surrealist self-portraits and Grant Wood in his version of Americana. This approach also moved to the literary world with writers like Franz Kafka, Milan Kundera and Gabriel García Márquez. These creators' commitment was to present "what happens when a highly detailed, realistic setting is invaded by something too strange to believe."¹ Their spirit echoes in *Landscapes of Transcendence: Magical Realism*.

Opening on February 1st at SEFA Hudson, Part II is entitled *Landscapes of Transcendence: Scenes of Ethereality*. This upcoming exhibition will highlight photographs characterized by a poetic and romantic aura. On one end of the spectrum are landscapes composed with *sfumato* effects—a soft transition between light and dark tones. These works have gauze like surfaces, often created through multiple exposures. Other featured photographs are rendered with a single prolonged exposure that results in rich detail and hyper-clarity. The exhibited artists include Carolyn Monastera, Leah Oates and Heather Boose Weiss.

Text by Susan Eley and Liz Lorenz



¹ Matthew Strecher (1999)