

Susan Eley

Fine Art

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Fireflies & Jewelweed
Rachelle Krieger



Susan Eley Fine Art, NYC
190 Orchard Street, New York, NY, 10002



September 12 — October 26, 2024
Opening Reception: Thursday, September 12, 6-8PM

Susan Eley Fine Art is pleased to present *Fireflies & Jewelweed*, a solo exhibition of new paintings by Rachelle Krieger. This exhibition debuts two series of mixed media paintings, rendered with acrylic, oil, spray paint and oil bar, created in conversation with one another. Daytime scenes painted *en plein air*, Krieger calls “Day Dreams,” capture the vitality of an unmanicured environment headed towards full bloom. The series “Night Visions” illuminates the space with whimsical dreamlike vistas. *Fireflies & Jewelweed* will be on view from September 12th - October 26th at the Lower East Side Gallery, with an opening reception on Thursday, September 12th from 6-8pm. *Fireflies & Jewelweed*, Krieger’s fourth solo exhibition with SEFA, is accompanied by a catalog featuring an essay by Charles A. Riley II, PhD.



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Krieger began making her “Day Dreams” paintings in the spring of 2023 in Cedarmere Estate in Roslyn Harbor, NY, close to the artist’s home. Throughout the season Krieger painted from one location in the preserve, moving her easel to capture various angles and vistas. This process allowed her to become intimately familiar with this specific landscape, whose growth and changes she chronicled over many months. Painted largely wet on wet, or *alla prima*, Krieger applies brushstrokes swiftly, delineating new bursts of overgrown foliage, seemingly in real time. The brushstrokes blend, overlap and fragment, as layers dissolve into each other and forms dominate and recede. Every movement of the artist’s brush is evident and intentional; one or two simple strokes define a cattail, flower bud or leaf. Patterns emerge amidst the plethora of shapes and lines, resulting in a surface that undulates with pronounced texture. Both absence and presence of paint take equal importance on Krieger’s canvases. In such packed compositions, select moments of restraint are subtle but impactful.

Krieger explains that the energy and whimsy she captures is a nod to Charles Burchfield’s visionary landscapes. Like Burchfield, she aims to breathe life into the depictions and portray living scenes rather than mimicking mother nature. Birches, weeds, leaves, cattails and more weave throughout the dense landscape inviting one in, but also hinting at what is hidden behind the rich foliage. Earth presents in warm, maroon and russet tones that glow; a red curtain acts as a stage for a burst of green tangles. Unlikely color partners of warm reds and oranges sit quite happily with bright jewel tones. Hot, lively colors hint to summer heat and autumn leaves to come. Vibrant oranges mark the presence of the titular fireflies and jewelweed, but also the sun, flowers, stars and dappled sunlight. The at times oppressive orange sun and sky were

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influenced by the unforgettable day the skies of New York were stained orange by Canadian wildfires in June 2023.

Krieger's paintings highlight the magical quality and spirituality of nature; trees often bracket the composition in an altarpiece-esque fashion as tendrils of green burst and fan out across the space. Krieger immortalizes and venerates this refuge while highlighting its temporality. Though these greens will wilt and disappear, Krieger's paintings also lead us to the understanding that life will return, more will grow, there will be a next season.

During the days of painting *en plein air*, Krieger describes how she began to dream about painting while sleeping, and thus turned those night visions into this series of night time paintings. In these, we see the landscape transformed into a dream-like setting. These surrealist imaginings of the natural world place Krieger's paintings within a cohort of contemporary women painters reimagining the tradition of the landscape genre, such as Shara Hughes, Lily Prince and Allison Green.

Krieger's intuitive process is particularly evident in these larger works. Patterning plays a stronger role in this group of paintings and the concept of space carries less import than their daytime predecessors. Leaves, vines and flowers reach across the plane in repetitive, rhythmic shapes. Broad large leaf forms and washes are juxtaposed with small delicately drawn vine-like forms and flowers. Swirling spirals move amidst dense and patterned foliage, reflecting and radiating light, indicating a breeze or hypnotic movement.

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Throughout her career Krieger has strived to capture nature's energy, electromagnetic forces and the movements we cannot see. Radiant orbs multiply across each canvas and shine through breaks in the sky. Flowers and fireflies—painted with fluorescent orange that glows under ultraviolet light—mirror each other from the earth and sky, reaching, ascending and descending across the plane. Krieger challenges our concept of space by blurring the boundaries between foreground and background, sky and earth, lending a dreamlike, mystical quality to the paintings.

In her bold brushwork and vibrating palette we can see the inspiration of Odilon Redon, David Hockney, Lynne Drexler and Vincent van Gogh. The introduction of deep, warm purples and blues evoke the stifling, hot atmosphere of a warm summer night. Krieger favors a palette of *l'heure bleue*, the moment just before sunrise or after sunset. This magical light tints the lush scenes, rich with fireflies dancing across the sky and plants blooming and intermingling. The mind is inclined to perceive these sinuous plants as figures dancing in the night. Marks of metallic oil stick shift light and create a glittering effect that along with the pervading jewel tones of the "Night Visions" allude to the precious rarity of these moments.

Press Release Text by Shannon O'Deens

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Rachelle Krieger

Artist Biography:

Rachelle Krieger (b. 1967, Queens, NY) graduated from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY in 1989 with a BFA and continued her studies at the Art Students League and the New York Studio School in New York City.

Rachelle Krieger's paintings have been exhibited in solo and group shows in numerous galleries and museums throughout the U.S. and abroad, including at Susan Eley Fine Art (New York, NY and Hudson, NY); the Heckscher Museum (Huntington, NY); the Islip Art Museum (East Islip, NY); the Mark Humphrey Gallery (Southampton, NY); Etra Fine Art (Miami, FL); the Judi Rotenberg Gallery (Boston, MA); the Dorian Grey Gallery (New York, NY); the Simon Gallery (Morristown, NJ); the Mulligan-Shanoski Gallery (San Francisco, CA); the Wyndy Morehead Gallery (New Orleans, LA); the Karen Mitchell Frank Gallery (Dallas, TX); and the Taylor Jardine Gallery (London, UK) and recently in the Nassau County Museum of Art's (Roslyn Harbor, NY) exhibition *Energy: The Power of Art* curated by Charles A. Riley II, PhD. Krieger is represented by Susan Eley Fine Art (New York, NY and Hudson, NY).

Krieger's work has been featured in many publications including WhiteHot Magazine of Contemporary Art, Two Coats of Paint, TIME Magazine, MODERN Magazine, New York Cottages & Gardens Magazine, HOUSE Magazine, LI Pulse Magazine, and Newsday. Her paintings are part of numerous private and corporate collections and can be seen in public spaces throughout the United States including at the Westin Hotel in New Orleans, the Ritz Carlton in DC, the Marriott Marquis in DC and the Texas State Bank in Houston.

Rachelle Krieger currently works and resides in Port Washington, NY and has helped foster her local art community through organizing open studio events, curating exhibits and participating as lecturer and guest juror for a variety of venues. Krieger served for more than a decade on the Art Advisory Council for the Adler Gallery at the Port Washington Public Library.

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Artist Statement:

Day Dreams and Night Visions

This new body of work began in early spring of 2023 and was primarily painted outdoors in one secluded wooded spot at the water's edge at Cedarmere, the former Roslyn Harbor NY country estate of prominent 19th-century poet William Cullen Bryant. Every day brought a different experience and encounter: new flowers blooming, butterflies fluttering, curious birds observing, invasive lanternflies falling on my head, hummingbirds chasing each other and feasting on the jewelweed blossoms, cattails swaying, the white birches standing like ghosts overlooking their riparian realm. Days when the sky turned orange and nights when the full moon rose orange – painting every day among the milkweed, butterflies and bamboo became intense and surreal. At night, I started to paint in my dreams, and upon waking would go into the studio and paint my night visions. The daytime *en plein air* paintings evolved into otherworldly landscapes, “ecstatic expressions”, as the American artist Charles Burchfield, known for his visionary watercolor landscapes, would have called them. This transformation from day to night, from observation to dream, and the processes of looking out and looking within, was infused within my work.