



Sandra Gottlieb, *October Waves, No. 4, 2013*, archival digital C-print, 27.5" x 41", edition 3/10

Resonance and Memory: The Essence of Landscape at the Elga Wimmer Gallery

by Dominique Nahas

Resonance and Memory: The Essence of Landscape an exhibition of artists organized by Katharine T. Carter and Associates and curated by Robert Curcio for the Elga Wimmer Gallery has gathered together eight perceptive artists whose artworks embody singular perspectives and approaches as they pertain to natural spaces and places, nature's felt and seen affects and effects. In so doing Curcio has offered a range of visual and tactile opportunities for the viewer to be affected emotionally and intellectually challenged by a range of artworks including sculpture, painting, printing and photography. Each distinctive art work in *Resonance and Memory* possess an inner life of

its own, animated, perhaps, by its own particular genius loci, the distinctive atmosphere or pervading spirit of a particular territory of the mind or of Mother Nature's that each artist has labored to arouse through the aesthetic dimension.

The two seasoned sculptors in the exhibition, Kathleen Elliot (who works with glass) and John Lyon Paul (who works with copper and wood) while being vastly different stylistically and in terms of material practice, nevertheless are joined together in terms of similar approaches to their art. Elliot and Paul apply equal amounts of intellectual rigor, emotional fervor and aesthetic exactitude in the making and shaping of their distinctive forms. The result

is instantaneous connection with the viewer. Elliot's plants, pods and floral forms, fruits and vegetables conjure up the setting of an extra-ordinary garden of earthly and ethereal wonders. Each sculpture is wondrously reimagined as an uncanny and hallucinatory specimen made incarnate in a parallel universe to us, plucked out of its own surreal eco-system and answerable only to itself. John Paul Lyon's sculptures have an intense venerational quality alluding as they do to the objects and rituals pertaining to the goals of self-realization and ethical refinement. His mindfully constructed artworks have a quiet presence: they recall cosmic prayer wheels and ancient scrolls. These in turn conjure up hermetic environments set aside for the veneration of deities – mountaintop sanctuaries devoted to the aspirations of those in pursuit of higher learning (and higher being), the walkways and byways of cloistered communities and

pilgrimage sites reserved for those self-selected anointed souls who keep the rest of us honest.

Rebecca Calderon Pittman makes nuanced and quietly persuasive prints that she calls *Recombinant Drawings* that are drawn from layers of renderings on translucent film that are subsequently digitally sutured to create a mirage-like floating space. In this space details pertaining to inside and those pertaining to outside merge into a hybrid hallucinatory ensemble that has a hallucinatory, dream-like effect. Traces of voluntary and involuntary memories converge. Pittman's aesthetic recalls cinematic montage with shifts of focus attempting to manage an overflow of mental flotsam mirroring the ideational world as well as subliminal optical and neuron-induced phenomenon such as retinal floaters.

Another painter who works in nature and who uses with optical layerings is Martin Weinstein whose "spatial theater" artworks consist of his use of multiple stacked sheets of Plexiglas onto which he has drawn scenes from garden views of his property. The artist's paintings bear testimony to his introspective involvement with the succession and co-existence of appearances. There is a memoirist and even a commemorative component to such a vision as ephemeral sensations of transience permeate his work. The painter's see-through layers become structurally analogous to his sophisticated realization that the depiction of

permanence might somehow include effects of succession and simultaneity. Weinstein's brilliance involves an aesthetic codification through the development of a process that invokes multiple perceptions as well the accumulation of variable memories and shifting recognitions onto the surface of consciousness.

The two photographers selected

to participate in *Resonance and Memory* J.J. Heureux and Sandra Gottlieb have a relation to the Deep and the Frozen Deep. Roland Barthes would submit that photography stops time and makes us a witness to a version of reality that is all around us. Heureux produces a sumptuously detailed, heroically sized photograph entitled *Ross Ice Shelf* (2014) that bears



Martin Weinstein, *Sun Dogs*, 2012, acrylic on multiple acrylic panels, 37" x 40"



J.J. L'Heureux, *Ross Ice Shelf 1*, 2014, archival photograph, 32" x 144", edition 2/2



Kathleen Elliot, *Dora's Tumbleweed*, 2014, glass, 17" x 10" x 10"



Gerry Tuten, *Cold Creek*, 2012, acrylic, 48" x 48"



Gail Watkins, *Natural Cleft*, 2010-2012, mixed media on canvas, 31" x 42"

reduktivism that clings to her image (we are looking at an image of the face of a frozen wall 150 meters high and extending for 800 kilometers) that bespeaks of the sublime as much as it does of Ripley's–Believe-It–Or–Not. By that I mean to say that Heureux poses the teasing challenge: how far can she avoid the aesthetic categories of picturesque and sublime in her composition – that is achieve the non-aesthetic description of the land in her photograph? It's an open question that hangs, liminally, in between the forensic and the poetic. Sandra Gottlieb's stop-action "portraits" from her *October Waves* series depicts individual waves on the verge of cascading and breaking at Rockaway Beach in Queens, New York. Each image seems to get to the core of each wave's unique and short-lived personality. Gottlieb's efforts move us as any memento-mori is meant to do.

The painters Gail Watkins and Gerry Tuten also invoke ephemerality's power. Both artists create energetic fields in painting natural environments with expressionistic brio. Gerry Tuten's

silent testimony to her experience of confronting, head-on a vast vista as frozen object. What is captured by the photographic eye in real terms is a small portion of the Ross Ice Shelf

in Antarctica (in its entirety the Shelf mass is the size of France). Heureux's photographic subject appears to be a white blank and there is a certain amount of hallucinatory heroic

imagery of reflections of sky and leaves bouncing off the surface of a local pond demonstrate a remarkable capacity to explore and embody light and movement, her brushstrokes signifiers of elemental transience and ephemerality. Gail Watkins, on the other hand, is a painter whose pictorial surfaces are so unusually pressed down and worked in they recall living terrain or geological samples (body samples from Mother Earth, perhaps). The artist's painting *Natural Cleft* (2010-2012) is a poetic recollection of the condition of the primordial, the essential, the instinctive, the unconscious, of prima material prior to it being separated, cleaved, by reason. If there is a vista here, a "site" to see, it is perhaps a glimmer of an "insight" that the artist provides. It is an internal, perhaps subcutaneous landscape that Watkins intends to envision for us, one that allows us to re-identify and re-connect with our atavistic roots and sense of play as homo sapiens and homo ludens.



Rebeca Calderon Pittman, *Intuitive Continuity*, 2010, unique print, 9" x 12"



John Lyon Paul, *Pilgrimage Scroll*, 1996, hammered copper, patina, painted wood, 33" x 52" X 9.5"