

Hefty, Kathleen. "Hope Gangloff," *The Brooklyn Rail*, 23 November 2019.

## BROOKLYN RAIL



Hope Gangloff, *Weather on Mount Monadnock*, 2019. Acrylic on canvas, 24 x 36 inches. Photo: Donald Stahl, NYC. Courtesy Susan Inglett Gallery, NY.

Landscape painting isn't typically thought of as seductive or radical, but that isn't the case with Hope Gangloff's eponymous exhibition at Susan Inglett Gallery. Gangloff's uncanny use of color and suggestive line work sets a mood that is both alluring and enticing. As much of California faces another season of devastating and uncontrollable wildfires, one is reminded that the majestic trees of Gangloff's views—some of which were created while she was there painting ocean conservationist Julie Packard for the National Portrait Gallery—can end up as match sticks in other parts of the state. This makes the work feel critical and intriguing in a way atypical of landscapes.

Those familiar with Gangloff's practice most likely know her expressive portraits of friends and colleagues that rely heavily on the artist's unique gestural brushwork to capture the vibrant personalities of her subjects. This body of new work reveals Gangloff's talent for depicting nature with similar feeling. Like her portraits, the work has a distinct aura that emphasizes unexpected colors and signature brush strokes. Bright and inventive—approaching Technicolor at times—the hues conjure a realm that feels disconnected from reality. Neon greens and oranges, underlying pinks and bright blues dominate the color spectrum, bringing forth hues that evoke the altered state of psychedelic experiences. Whether a mountain or windowsill, each scene's mood builds a cinematic ambience—like an eerie soundtrack that undulates in the background in a slightly unsettling way. In comparison to the wild nature depicted in *Icicle Weeds on Monterey Bay/ Spring* (2018/2019), for example, the domesticity of potted plants before a window in *Fungus Gnats* (2019) displays a similar sensational palette. The blue-green streaks of rain in the background of *Rainy Day in Echo Lake/Spring* (2019) or the static glowing orange that emanates from the first floor of *Lands End House, Lake George* (2019) have a captivating effect.



Hope Gangloff, *Summer Night in the East Village*, 2019. Acrylic and collage on wood, 20 x 30 inches. Photo: Donald Stahl, NYC. Courtesy Susan Inglett Gallery, NY.

"By intensifying *all* the colors one arrives once again at quietude and harmony," wrote Van

Hefty, Kathleen. "Hope Gangloff," *The Brooklyn Rail*, 23 November 2019.

Gogh in 1888 to his sister in regard to the "tropical" color he admired in Japanese prints.<sup>11</sup> The extraordinary liveliness Van Gogh described in the flowers and trees of these artworks speaks to their capacity to capture a universal essence through color and balance. A similar vibrancy exists in Gangloff's ethereal depictions of flora, like the magnificent colors of *Borrowed Orchids (Study for Airport Painting Reprise)*, (2018/2019), where the simple bend of the flower's cascading weight beautifully harmonizes the composition.

There is a palpable intensity and spontaneity to the paintings in the large gallery but, as the numerous studies on view can attest, a thoughtful formalism prevails. According to the press release, the locations mark significant chapters from the artist's "most poignant career and private moments—various places she has lived and worked"; a cabin at a residency in New Hampshire, a New York City apartment, a mountain in Monterey. Her familiarity with the locations balances the disquietude that the bold palette might have otherwise elicited.



Hope Gangloff, *Birch Stand Southside of Cheney Cabin*, 2019. Acrylic and collage on canvas, 82 x 54.  
Photo: Donald Stahl, NYC. Courtesy Susan Inglett Gallery, NY.

In the gallery's entryway a wall of works on paper are hung salon style, affixed with neon orange tape. These small studies foreshadow both the color and artistic method of the exhibition. Similar to preparatory drawings in an artist studio, this display feels like a welcoming into the world of the artist. In *From MacDowell with Lurve* (2019), a still life of an artist's desk, a spool of the same orange adhesive used to hang the drawings is labeled: "Artists Tape Artists Tape Artists Tape," an example of Gangloff's incorporation of the quotidian in her interior scenes (i.e. Elmer's Glue and Sharpies). This inclusion of the banal is a testament to the verisimilitude of the tableaux. Additionally, in the back gallery room, dozens of drawings on paper provide insight into the genesis of the show's more resplendent pieces. *Study for Summer Night in the East Village* (2019) shows the beginning stages of its final counterpart. We can see here the changes that take place in the evolution of a work, in this case the removal of a potted plant in the composition.

Gangloff's technique of incorporating subtle collage in many of the paintings, a raised pebble, for example, or a pair of shoes in the foreground of *MacDowell Cheney Cabin in the Winter*

Hefty, Kathleen. "Hope Gangloff," *The Brooklyn Rail*, 23 November 2019.

*Super Moon* (2019), adds dimension. The artist also paints around edges of the wooden surfaces of the paintings, further expanding the spatial complexity of her otherwise flat surfaces. The bold choices here reinforce Gangloff's willingness to merge styles and technique and to reveal the artist's hand.

In another letter of the same year, Van Gogh wrote to Emile Bernard, "one must attack [the glorious splendors of nature] nonetheless, however incompetent one may feel before the unspeakable perfection."<sup>ii</sup> Dreamscapes grown from the seeds of the artist's personal environment, Gangloff's dynamic scenes tempt you into a world of her own making: one of enrapturing color, sweeping lines, and familiar objects turned surreal. Like her massive painting of the starry sky that dominates the exhibition, Gangloff reminds us of our collective spiritual relationship to nature, while celebrating her own artistic process and history.

---

<sup>i</sup> Chipp, Herschel B, Peter Selz, and Joshua C. Taylor. *Theories of Modern Art: A Source Book by Artists and Critics*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968, p. 31.

<sup>ii</sup> *Ibid*, p. 33.