

Maya Brym

Pathways



October 12 – November 11, 2023

Morgan Lehman is pleased to announce the opening of “Pathways,” a show of new oil paintings on linen by NYC-based artist Maya Brym. This marks Brym’s first exhibition with the gallery.

The works on display are rooted in the artist’s experiences walking through the woodlands of the Northeastern U.S., where she was born and raised. In 2021, Brym began taking snapshots of the landscape during these excursions, and used the images as source material for a series of watercolor works that became the foundation for the artist’s paintings on stretched linen. Brym’s project explores moments experienced outside, when something in the landscape extends awareness beyond the personal into a realm that is both familiar and unknowable.

The title of this exhibition, “Pathways,” suggests the notion of directed movement through space. It also implies that there might be multiple ways in which to proceed. The artist sees these paintings as “landscapes, imaginative shelters, and social worlds where marks interrelate to build a dynamic and transitory whole.” Standing before each painting, the viewer is invited to enter and look around; we move about within an open-ended environment both cohesive and expansive.

The works’ vibrant palette deviates far from local color, pointing more towards the bold hues of gemstones or storybooks. Meanwhile systems of essentialized gestural marks intertwine in a lyrical manner, yielding worlds of rich suggestion. The most solid features of each landscape are highlighted in smooth yet punchy brushstrokes that often sit above the colored grounds in a semi-impasto. These raised marks snag one’s eye as it moves across the visual plane. Brym’s gestures swirl around the spaces that they inhabit, bringing to mind natural phenomena: we might recall rustling leaves on a fall day or raindrops cascading during a sun shower. The works’ gestural energy is animated and serves to push and pull our vision, yet there is often a sense of peacefulness in each piece – the inevitable grounding nature of landscape taking hold.

Though these paintings originate in moments experienced outside, they use the idea of landscape as a truly flexible architecture for painting: there is always the spontaneity of painting’s materiality at play, whereby networks of forms and color come into being through their collisions with each other in real time. In this way, painterly process is another means by which the artist imbues the work with her touch. Brym’s paintings acknowledge the history of landscape painting but envision the genre through a lens of abstraction. They are meditations on the visceral and phenomenological qualities of pure color, and celebrations of the implied movement of the painterly mark, that connects us with a space of metaphor between human and nature.

Maya Brym has lived and worked in New York City since 2007. Her work explores interconnections among landscape, memory, and imagination through the medium of painting. She trained in art at Yale and UPenn and has since exhibited her work at Morgan Lehman (NYC), frosch&portmann (NYC), Nancy Margolis (NYC), the Yale Slifka Center (New Haven, CT), Michael Rosenthal (San Francisco, CA), Gross McCleaf (Philadelphia, PA), Jack the Pelican Presents (Brooklyn, NY), and Vaudeville Park (Brooklyn, NY), among other venues. She is a 2005 Fellow of the Terra Foundation Summer Residency in Giverny, France and a 2010 Fellow of NYSCA/NYFA, for which she organized a group exhibition, *April Sky*, in 2011. Her work is held in private and corporate collections throughout the United States.