

ET IN ARCADIA EGO

June 2—October 2, 2016

David Molesky, Guest Curator

New Museum Los Gatos

Lisa Coscino, Executive Director

Marianne McGrath, Curator of Art





JULIE HEFFERNAN

Self-Portrait as Great Acceleration, 2015

Oil on canvas

Courtesy of the Catharine Clark Gallery,
San Francisco

Regarding *Self-Portrait as Great Acceleration*, Heffernan states that it “Describes the intersection of modernism and pre-culture: a red-hot charioteer running amok meets the charred remains of earth and sky. What was once a great heap of paradisiacal possibility is now a kind of devil’s chamber, emitting smoke signals with its last breath, signaling failure. Even the trees are antic vestiges of their former selves, their natural beauty now gone grotesque with their clumps of lurid and artificial pseudo-abundance.”

ET IN ARCADIA EGO

Since the dawn of consciousness, human beings have longed for the ideal. In the corners of our collective imaginations, we have built the archetype of the Utopian fantasy. As civilization began to concentrate into urban environments a few millennia ago, city dwellers wondered if perhaps the grass was greener in the shepherds pasture. Since then, artists and writers have shaped this longing for perfected landscape and ease of lifestyle into the myth of Arcadia.

The Arcadian myth has persisted through time largely due to the ability of poets to adapt it to new landscapes. The shepherd lifestyle of Sicily was first described as idyllic by Theocritus (Greece, 300 BCE) then in rural Italy by Virgil (Rome, 44 CE). Later, the Peloponnese Peninsula was similarly described by Sannazaro (Florence, 1503) and much more recently the Mediterranean-like climate of California by John Steinbeck, who lived and worked locally. Now Los Gatos, this hippy enclave in the hills above Silicon Valley, is the perfect setting to have a conversation about the lineage and influence of the great pastoral tradition. Certainly poets first crafted our understanding of Arcadia, but it has been the painters, especially Nicolas Poussin, who have made the myth accessible to the populace. From 1637-1638, Poussin painted one of the most enigmatic elegiac paintings in history, *Et in Arcadia Ego*. Since its conception, the painting (from which this exhibition receives its title) has inspired various interpretations and is believed to contain secret messages.

From this iconic painting we can distill three essential qualities: the idealized landscape, the shepherd as outsider figure and the contemplation of mortality. For this exhibition, we have selected 20 painters from both American coasts and Europe who work within the Arcadian tradition. Although each work contains all the identified concepts, the exhibited works have been grouped into these three sections to deepen our understanding of how each aspect of Arcadian myth is reinterpreted by artists today.

- David Molesky, Guest Curator

ET IN ARCADIA EGO: CONTEMPORARY RENDERINGS

by Donald Kuspit

Art historians tell us that the first painting titled *Et in Arcadia Ego*—"I am even in paradise"—was made by Guercino in ca. 1618-22. The I is death, and Arcadia was the Greek paradise: the message is that one can't avoid death even if one lives in paradise. In Guercino's painting death appears in the form of an ugly skull, rather naked looking and sterile compared to the beautiful, flourishing nature of paradise. Two seated shepherds, one old, bearded, and in shadow, the other young, fresh faced, and brightly illuminated—however much a shadow falls across his white shirt—contemplate, in disturbed curiosity, the skull. Rustic shepherds also appear, now idealized into classical figures, in the two versions of Poussin's *The Arcadian Shepherds*, 1627 and 1637-38, and the skull has become a tomb. In all three works the shepherds are on the verge of disillusionment.

Now what is striking about the contemporary renderings of the *Et in Arcadia Ego* theme is that not a single skull appears and that Arcadia is no longer a landlocked garden of paradise, as it is in Guercino and Poussin, but often includes a body of water, indeed, an ocean in Sandow Birk's *The Death of Mark Foo at Mavericks*, 2016. In Birk's painting it is the Pacific Ocean, turbulent and restless—ironically, the garden of paradise has become its barren, rocky shore—in which Mark Foo drowned, confirming the tragic import of the *Et in Arcadia Ego* theme. In contrast, the black water in Seamus Conley's *Po' Boy*, 2015 is as morbidly calm as the Styx. It is the water before the storm, while the water in Holly Lane's *After the Storm*, 2012 is as calm and luminous as heaven. In Agosinto Arrivabene's *Il sogno di Asclepio*, 2015, Aron Wiesenfeld's *Bloom*, 2014, David Ligare's *Et in Arcadia Ego*, 2016, and Holly Lane's *After the Storm*, 2012 the water adds a lyric, soothing touch to the somber scene, lightening the melancholy mood, and in Brad Kunkle's *Reclamation*, 2011 it is a narcissistic pool in which a fair maiden, with long tresses and wearing a wreath of flowers, contemplates her image. The pool is her tomb, for she will drown in it trying to embrace the image.

There's no water in Jason Yarmosky's *Counting Sheep*, 2016, but the aging insomniac woman is also a self-absorbed narcissist—her sinfully garish dyed red hair suggests she is trying to hold on to the seductive femme fatale she once was—but she looks upward to heaven rather than down into the mirror for salvation. But it's rather

last minute: she is embedded in blackness, suggesting that death is upon her. The nature in Julie Heffernan's *Self-Portrait as Great Acceleration*, 2015 and Kim Kleeve's *Turtle Skull Rock*, 2001 is far from "classically" beautiful—it's melodramatically threatening—and the garden of paradise in Robin F. Williams' *The Gardeners*, 2013 is full of prickly cacti—they may store the water of life but they look deadly. On the other hand, there's no sign of death in the lovely flowers that flood Stephanie Peek's *Deeper I*, 2011 nor in the benign landscape in Theodore Wores' *Rinconada Hills, Los Gatos*, 1922. Death makes a token appearance in the form of a more or less barren tree in Odd Nerdrum's portrait of himself *In Arcadia*, 2011—garbed in white, he's a sort of saint alone in the wilderness—in sharp contrast to the dead wood of the modernist sculpture in Ligare's brutally ironic *Et in Arcadia Ego (Modern View)*, 1987. And there's a body of placid water, its tranquility at odds with the thrusting diagonals of the out of place constructivist sculpture abandoned on its shore. In Maria Kreyn's grandly apocalyptic *Even Here*, 2016, with its classically garbed figure contemplating the unfinished structures—ruins?—of the modern world, the water is reduced to an incidental trickle, but it is in the foreground, making it noticeable.

The presence of water in these contemporary renderings of the *Et in Arcadia Ego* theme is striking, especially because there is no water in the traditional rendering of the theme, suggesting that the iconographic change—the replacement of the static skull and closed tomb by the open body of moving water—is a sort of defense against death. It is a kind of half-hearted denial of it, for the works suggest—as do those of Guercino and Poussin—its fatal attraction: the water of life is soothing, a promise that life can become a garden of paradise, however much it must inevitably end in death. Thus a sort of conflict between life and death is covertly staged in the contemporary *Et in Arcadia Ego* paintings, in contrast to the traditional paintings, where it is overtly staged—where death dramatically intrudes into paradise. The implicit—unconscious—message of the contemporary *Et in Arcadia Ego* paintings is that "Even life is present in death." Life endures even in a world stopped by death. The river of life fertilized paradise, and paradise remains however marred by death.

Something even deeper is involved in the contemporary *Et in Arcadia Ego* paintings in which water—rather than the skull or a tomb—is prominently featured. In the Renaissance the phrase "Et in Arcadia Ego" referred to "the underground stream," that is, the "underground" tradition of arcane knowledge that existed since antiquity and continued into Christianity. Thus the tomb in Poussin's painting has been said to be the tomb of Christ, the tomb in which he rose from the dead—a tomb that held the secret of eternal life, the tomb that promised resurrection. The skull in Guercino's painting is the skull at the foot of the cross on which Christ was crucified. In Christ's tomb a miracle mysteriously occurred. Christ's skull became the Holy Ghost. I suggest that the contemporary painters of *Et in Arcadia Ego* have unwittingly stumbled upon the sacred meaning of death.

IDEALIZED LANDSCAPE

The word Arcadia quickly brings to mind an image of an idealized landscape. Derived from the pastoral regions of ancient Greece, this vision might contain a vista of green rolling hills coming to life with flowering plants, dotted with trees and rocky outcroppings. Here you might see a shepherd who has escaped the heat of high noon by ducking under the shade of a tree for a siesta.

The Arcadian landscape exists on the outskirts of wilderness and human settlement. This fringe territory is not nature in its raw form, but a nature partially domesticated by transient human presence. A trodden path or comfy log to sit on helps the next passer through feel comfortable while they experience the bliss that comes from being close to nature. It is a landscape of the highest level of beauty that seems also to be catered to human pleasure.

In Poussin's painting *Et in Arcadia Ego*, the idealized landscape serves as the stage for the shepherds' discovery of the tomb. In David Ligare's painting of the same name, he gives us a larger and slightly askewed view of the landscape depicted in Poussin's composition. Instead of depicting a congregation of shepherds contemplating the tomb, Ligare concentrates on the tomb's setting and compresses human activity into the form of relief sculpture on the sarcophagus' surface.

Other paintings in this section concentrate entirely upon the perfected landscape with elements that suggest a former presence of humans. In Theodore Wores' painting of *Los Gatos*, a dirt road traverses a hillside cutting through flowering trees and bushes above a collection of small cottages. Similarly the serpentine path of Astrid Preston's painting guides the viewer through a landscape cultivated by the human hand.



DAVID LIGARE
Et in Arcadia ego, 2016
Oil on linen
40 x 48 inches
Courtesy of Winfield Gallery, Carmel

In Ligare's painting *Et in Arcadia Ego*, we are given a wide view that focuses on the landscape depicted in Poussin's composition of the same name. Ligare explains, "In my painting I have moved the figures from their position as actors in the painting and depicted instead a tomb with a bas-relief showing a scene of the death of Patroclus from Homer's *Iliad*, set in a landscape that represents the ideal Arcadia transferred over time from Greece, to Sicily, to California."



KIM KEEVER
Turtle Skull Rock, 2001
Photographic print
Courtesy of the artist

Although this image looks as if it was photographed on a blustery afternoon on the Peloponnesian Peninsula, Kever constructs these landscapes and atmospheres in miniature in his studio. “*Turtle Skull Rock* was photographed after a plaster ‘mountain’ eroded in a 200 gallon aquarium filled with water for several months,” explains Kever.

(across)
ASTRID PRESTON
Mountain Path, 1989
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of Craig Krull Gallery

Preston states that there is “no wilderness” in her *Mountain Path*, only “a planted landscape, pointing to the ideal in a manmade environment.” The lack of perspective in her painting is a nod to the human journey through life, “wherever you are, you are there in the now.”



OUTSIDER OR LIMINAL FIGURES

Aristotle famously said “Man is by nature a social animal.” We all feel the need to be part of a larger group. Anyone outside this group is considered a stranger and viewed with a certain mystique or sometimes even with paranoia.

Since the domestication of animals, the nomadic shepherd has become the iconic outsider figure, wandering territories on the fringe of both raw nature and human settlement. Romanticized for being perfectly at home in rustic settings, shepherds are civilization’s ambassadors in limbo between human and animal worlds. These liminal figures also have plenty of time for leisurely activity: naps, making music, and stopping to contemplate things that most urban dwellers would never slow down enough to notice.

In Poussin’s painting *Et in Arcadia Ego*, four youths gather around a tomb to discuss the meaning of an elegiac text. Poussin, one of the greatest classical scholars to lift a brush, chose to paint his shepherds in accordance with Greco-Roman pastoral poetry, dressing them in the robes of antiquity and arming them with staffs. These simple rustic people are not tainted by the concerns of urban society, and therefore they are able to interpret the tomb with wonder and curiosity. In his painting *Self Portrait in Arcadia*, Odd Nerdrum depicts himself as a temporary refugee, floating between two worlds. In Robin Williams’ work, *The Gardeners*, two male figures lounge languidly in an idyllic cactus garden, unmotivated and unconcerned. In classical literature, when shepherds are not taking a siesta in the shade of a tree, they pass the time playing rustic instruments and singing songs about their passionate longings in life. In Gillian Pederson-Krag’s painting *Two Performers*, one seated figure plays a lyre while another sings and dances deeper into a pasture.



ATTRIBUTED TO NICOLAS POUSSIN (PENDING)

Promised Land, 1650s

Oil on canvas

Courtesy of Odd Nerdrum, Norway

Nomadic herdsmen traverse a lush landscape, moving towards distant blue hills with their belongings strapped to the tops of animals. The male figure wears a bright blue tunic, probably signifying that he is nobility.

The Nerdrum family discovered this painting, originally attributed to Salvador Rosa, that they have now attributed to Poussin and believe that it is a composition telling the story of the migration of Abraham, Sarah and the newborn Isaac. One of their attribution points is the claim that the same model portrayed in the roll of Abraham can be seen in other Poussin paintings. Nerdrum also determined that the paint handling in the landscape, especially the quality of the glaze in the trees and mountains is typical of small paintings by Poussin.

The attribution process is ongoing for *Promised Land*. Obtaining the opinions of objective experts, analyzing history and searching for similar works can be an interesting, but extensive process. Authenticating a work of art and building a consensus of evidence requires several complimentary and necessary steps: Art-historical documentation, stylistic connoisseurship and scientific analysis.



ROBIN F. WILLIAMS (b. 1984)

The Gardeners, 2013

Oil on canvas

Courtesy of the artist and P.P.O.W. Gallery, New York City



Robin F. Williams states, “*The Gardeners* shows us the journey of two men (or perhaps two versions of the same man) interrupted. They are pictured lounging, top to tail, in an idyllic southwestern cactus garden. The men neither seem concerned with the threats nature poses or the dissolving of their goals. The American dream has always been about masculine bodies conquering wild places. These men sit to ponder where and when that myth is allowed to rest in repose.”



ODD NERDRUM

In Arcadia (Self Portrait), 2011

oil on canvas

50 x 44 inches

Courtesy of the artist

“When I feel the breath of death... and run in hiding, I find Arcadia once again. This quiet beautiful day... Saturday... or Sunday. No bureaucrats are completely awake, only I know how precious day off is. Persecutors vacationing or resting, and I enjoy Arcadia once again.”

– Odd Nerdrum

Odd Nerdrum is a Norwegian figurative painter. His approach to painting is based on traditional methods that include working from live models, often himself.

CONTEMPLATION OF MORTALITY

The great paradox of human consciousness is that we are living while fully aware of our own mortality. Even within the idealized landscapes of Arcadia, in moments of bliss and wonder, reminders of the impermanence of life begin to creep in subtly. These reminders come from the beauty of nature.

A delicate flower sometimes only explodes with color and scents for a single day. The golden hour of the sunset, which makes everything seem as if through rose colored glasses, also contains that twisting sentiment that soon the sun will set and all will be dark.

In Poussin's *Et in Arcadia Ego*, a group of youths discover a tomb and contemplate the elegy carved on the façade. For centuries, scholars have attempted to decipher Poussin's intention behind the message. The most common understanding is that it should be read, "I too am here in Arcadia," meaning that even within this perfect landscape exists the presence of death. Death therefore is not to be feared, but is to be seen as part of the holistic cycle of life. Other interpretations have insisted that the elegy is simply stating that the person within the tomb once also lived a life of pleasure, just as we who are living.

In Agostino Arrivabene's *Il Sogno di Asclepio*, a male youth transforms into new life through the process of death and by becoming one with the earth itself. In Jason Yarmosky's *Counting Sheep*, a solitary aging woman faces the last glimmers of light, counting her last moments like sheep, until she eventually falls forever asleep. In the painting *Po' Boy* by Seamus Conley, the artist reflects upon being a young boy and his first realizations about the fragility of life. In Stephanie Peek's floral composition *Deeper I*, the flower becomes the symbol for the fleeting, short-lived beauty of life itself. In Sandow Birk's composition *The Death of Mark Foo at Mavericks*, he reminds us that man's tragedy is small in the broader context of nature.





STEPHANIE PEEK

Deeper I, 2011

Oil on canvas

Courtesy of Seager Gray Gallery

Peek states, "Although flowers traditionally represent the impermanence of life, a kind of memento-mori, the very fact that they ever existed can afford solace and be seen as an intimation of beauty as an immortal quality. Like paradise or Arcadia, the very absence of what once was causes us to long for it, a longing that may include melancholy, nostalgia even, but not only -- also the sense that there is an unchanging principle behind beauty, a kind of soul, the idea of paradise as possible."



AGOSTINO ARRIVABENE

Il Sogno di Asceplio, 2015

Tempera and oil on antique panel

Courtesy of Cara Gallery, New York City

“The subject is of a young man asleep but at the same time he seems to be being swallowed up by the ground in an earthy digestion. The man sinks into a dreamlike state and at the same instant is invaded by the land and devoured in mosses and various absurd plants raised directly from the study of the forms created by Ernst Haeckel in his illustrated text ‘Kunst Formen der Natur’ (the beautiful forms in nature).”

-Agostino Arrivabene, translated from Italian by Irene Cassina.



JASON YARMOSKY
Counting Sheep, 2016
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of the artist

Yarmosky describes *Counting Sheep* is a mental exercise to put oneself to sleep. This painting depicts the tension between sleep and wakefulness, directly relating to the “paradox of living.”

INDEX



AGOSTINO ARRIVABENE (b. 1967)
Il Sogno di Asceplio, 2015
Tempera and oil on antique panel
Courtesy of Cara Gallery, New York City

Agostino Arrivabene lives and works in Gradella di Pandino, Italy. The elusive Italian painter, is often cloistered in his three-story home and studio deep in the rural Italian countryside. His work stands alone in the field of contemporary figurative painting for its unique surfaces. His process is at times destructive and then delicate, and his content is a wunderkammer of ancient mythology and alchemic transformation. After graduating from Brera Academy of Fine Art in Milan, Arrivabene traveled around the world visiting museums in order to directly observe the artworks of the masters, absorbing their painting techniques. Arrivabene's intention has always been to find a connection between the beauty and poetics that characterized the past, but contradict the present. His artistic research has developed under the influence of the old masters. In this very intimate and historical path, he discovered traditional painting techniques, like the handcrafted preparation of colors. On canvas, Arrivabene expresses his thoughts about the transience of the human condition, which can be considered a "memento mori." His work includes a variety of consistent subjects among landscapes and figures, which explore topics such as evil, death, pain and paradise.



SANDOW BIRK (b. 1962)
The Death of Mark Foo at Mavericks, 2016
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of the Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco

Based in Los Angeles, Sandow Birk attended Otis College of Art and Design. His work has deals with contemporary life in its entirety, including themes of inner city violence, graffiti, various political issues, war, prisons, surfing, and skateboarding. Recent projects have explored the war in Iraq, the Constitution of the United States and the Holy Qur'an. Birk is the recipient of several awards including a NEA International Travel Grant, a Guggenheim Fellowship for painting, a Fulbright Fellowship and a Getty Fellowship. He was Artist in Residence at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American Art in 2007. Birk is represented by Catharine Clark Gallery in San Francisco, and P.P.O.W. Gallery in New York City.



SEAMUS CONLEY (b. 1976)
Po' Boy, 2015
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of Seamus Conley and Andrea Schwartz Gallery, San Francisco

Conley explains, "When I set out to make *Po' Boy* I wanted the setting to resemble a parking lot in West LA at 2am, after the rain. I wanted the Santa Monica Mountains with their twinkling lights in the distance. This was an image I would see as an adolescent and always thought it was very peaceful and calm, almost spiritual. The figure is a child with white blonde hair. This is a recurring element in my work as it reflects an image of myself as a youth. He's tending to a still lamb that offers an element of mystery and adds to the elusive narrative that I wish to achieve through my work."

Seamus Conley is a Los Angeles native now living and working in San Francisco, California. A self taught painter, he received the Pollock-Krasner award in 2006 and was a SFMOMA SECA Award Nominee in 2007. His

work has been exhibited in galleries throughout the United States, including a solo museum exhibit at The Lancaster (California) Museum of Art and History. Conley has been featured in publications such as *Art Ltd.*, *Hi Fructose*, *The San Francisco Examiner*, *SF Weekly*, *Empty Mag*, and *American Art Collector*.



JULIE HEFFERNAN (b. 1956)
Self Portrait as Great Acceleration, 2015
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of the Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco

Julie Heffernan's work explores mind's eye imagery to create complex environments. Heffernan was raised in Northern California but currently resides in Brooklyn, NY. She received her BFA from UC Santa Cruz and her MFA from the Yale University School of Art. She, along with fellow Brooklyn-based artist Virginia Wagner, run *Painters on Painting*, a blog which allows artists to share their favorite works of art. Heffernan is a Professor of Fine Art at Montclair State University. Heffernan is a member of the National Academy and has received numerous grants including an NEA. Her work can be found in the collections of major museums including the Brooklyn Museum of Art. She has been featured in solo and group exhibitions around the country, and her work has garnered critical attention in numerous publications including *Artforum*, *Art in America*, *Artnews*, and *The New York Times*. She is represented by Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco; P.P.O.W. Gallery, New York and Mark Moore Gallery, Culver City, CA.



KIM KEEVER (b. 1955)
Turtle Skull Rock, 2001
Photographic print
Courtesy of the artist

Keeper has a BS in Engineering from Old Dominion University in Virginia and was for a time a thermal engineer working primarily on NASA projects. Keeper changed careers in the late 1970s to become a full time artist. He has always drawn upon his original vocation by retaining a scientific and investigative process in his work, while at the same time displaying an astute awareness of historical landscape art. Keeper's landscapes, that are at first glance redolent of the Hudson River School and the German Romantic painters, are actually detailed miniature scenes that he builds himself, places in a 200-gallon tank, submerges in water, and then photographs.

Kim Kever lives and works in New York. His work can be found in numerous collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum and the Hirshhorn Museum.



BRAD KUNKLE (b. 1978)
Reclamation, 2011
Oil, gold and silver leaf on wood
Private Collection, Brian Wannamaker

Brad Kunkle was born in Lehighton, Pennsylvania and currently lives and works in New York City. He graduated Kutztown University in 2001 with a BFA concentration in Painting. Kunkle invites us to an otherworldly place, and yet, it is a place that feels familiar to us. His themes explore intuition and following one's own nature, the power of feminine energies, and shedding the dogmas predicated from previous generations. His work asks us to trust ourselves; to embrace the unknown, and to seek beauty—an aspect of life, that he believes is key to thriving cultures and the dissemination of humanity.



MARIA KREYN (b. 1987)
Even Here, 2016
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of the artist

Maria Kreyn is a Russian born, New York based figurative artist, painter, wanderer, adventurer and thinker. Maria's work delves into the inner-most workings of the human condition—it's passion and isolation.

She exhibits nationally and abroad, is published in a variety of magazines and books and her work can be found in collections throughout the United States and Europe. Most recently, her paintings have been featured as a focal point and narrative vehicle in the ABC TV drama *The Catch*. Kreyn's work delves into the innermost workings of the human condition—it's passion and isolation. The images gesture at qualities that are eternal, aiming to momentarily pause what Sontag calls 'that relentless melt of time.' Kreyn's paintings blend old master techniques into contemporary life and offer the viewer an experience of a deep, contemplative space.



HOLLY LANE (b. 1954)
After the Storm, 2012
Acrylic on carved wood
Courtesy of the artist and Forum Gallery, New York City

Holly Lane works and lives in San Jose, California, painting animals, people and scenes from the natural world to create allegories that address large philosophical questions in an intimate fashion. Her work integrates painting and frame, carving elaborate wooden frames that formally and contextually expand on the slightly surreal paintings within. Lane cites the art of the

Northern Renaissance, 19th-century Romanticism and environmental philosophy as influences. Born in 1954 in Cleveland, Ohio, Lane earned a BFA with great distinction in 1986 and an MFA in 1988 from San Jose State University. Lane has exhibited widely in museums and galleries, with 20 solo exhibitions and more than 90 group exhibitions, including one at the Whitney Museum of American Art in Stamford, Connecticut. Her work has been reviewed in *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *Art in America*, *ARTnews*, *Art & Antiques* and *PBS's online art magazine, art21*, to name a few. Holly Lane was awarded a Pollock-Krasner Grant for 2012–2013. Her work is held in private and public collections across the nation. Gallery and Museum exhibition venues include the Museum of Craft and Design, San Francisco; the Art Museum of Southeast Texas; The Whitney Museum of American Art, Stamford, CT; San Jose Museum of Art and Knoxville Museum of Art. Lane is represented by Forum Gallery in New York City.



DAVID LIGARE (b. 1945)
Et in Arcadia Ego, 2016
Oil on linen
Courtesy of Winfield Gallery, Carmel



DAVID LIGARE
Et in Arcadia Ego (View Moderne), 1987
Oil on panel
Courtesy of Hirschl & Adler Modern, New York

David Ligare works and lives in Corral de Tierra, California, the beautiful valley between Monterey and Salinas, which is the setting of Steinbeck's *Pastures of Heaven*. Ligare attended Art Center College of Design in Pasadena. His paintings

are in the collections of Uffizi Gallery in Florence, Italy, MOMA in New York, the de Young Museum, the San Jose Museum of Art, the Monterey Museum of Art and the Frye Museum of Art in Seattle.

David Ligare was born in Oak Park, Illinois in 1945. His family moved to Southern California when he was five years old. Ligare studied at the Art Center College of Design now in Pasadena. After completing school, Ligare was drafted into the army and was stationed near New York City. He began exhibiting in New York in 1966. Since that time, Ligare has had over forty solo exhibitions in New York, Los Angeles, London, Rome, San Francisco and other cities. His work has been included in group exhibitions all over the world and in many publications, most recently the monograph titled *David Ligare: California Classicist*. David Ligare lives in Monterey County, California in an area that John Steinbeck described as the “Pastures of Heaven.”



ARTHUR MATHEWS (1850-1945)

Monterey Bay, n.d.

Oil on canvas

Courtesy of W. Donald Head, Old Grandview Ranch, Saratoga, California

Born in Wisconsin and originally trained as an architect, Arthur F. Mathews turned to painting early in his career. In 1884 he moved to Paris to study at the Académie Julian. He settled in California in the late 1880s and completed several public mural commissions in Oakland, Sacramento, and San Francisco. Mathews became the director of the California School of Design in 1889. He and his wife

Lucia Mathews were major figures in the Arts and Crafts movement, starting their own decorative arts business: The Furniture Shop. Matthews was inspired by the European classicism and traditions that had been part of his training. He also had a love for the California landscape, which is seen in much of his work, often incorporating native flowers and trees, open skies and pastoral scenes, and in some cases, youthful figures in flowing gowns that seem to be infused with the ideals of ancient Greece.



ODD NERDRUM (b. 1944)

In Arcadia (Self Portrait), 2011

Oil on canvas

Courtesy of the artist

Born in Sweden as a World War II refugee in 1944, Odd Nerdrum is a Norwegian figurative painter, and studied briefly at the Dusseldorf Academy with the German artist Joseph Beuys. Nerdrum went on to become an influential teacher and mentor; for decades he has educated apprentices and now runs the Nerdrum School, a European-based tuition-free apprenticeship program. He has authored many books, including a collection of short stories, and two books on his kitsch philosophy: *On Kitsch* (2001) and *Kitsch More than Art* (2011). Nerdrum’s work is held in many public collections worldwide including:

The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C.; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City; New Orleans Museum of Art New Orleans, Louisiana; Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, San Diego, California; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art, Cleveland, Ohio; and in Norway, The Astrup Fearnley Museum of Art, Oslo and in Sweden, The Gothenburg Museum of Art.



GILLIAN PEDERSON-KRAG (b. 1938)

Two Performers, 1981

Oil on canvas

Courtesy of the Innes Collection

Gillian Pederson-Krag received a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design and an MFA from Cornell University. In 1966 she returned to Cornell where

she taught in the Department of Fine Art until 1979. The Pennsylvania Academy, Indiana University, Boston University and the Rhode Island School of Design are among the schools she has taught at as a visiting critic. Pederson-Krag's work can be found in the New York Public Library Print Collection, The Memorial Art Gallery in Rochester, the Munson-Proctor-Williams Institute and the Heckscher Museum, The Mead Art Museum and the Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts, FAMSF.



STEPHANIE PEEK (b. 1940)
Deeper I, 2011
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of Seager Gray Gallery

Stephanie Peek lives and works in San Francisco. She received her MFA from UC Berkeley in 1996. Her work is held in the collections of Stanford University, the New York Public Library, the US Library of Congress, Harvard University, UC Berkeley. Exhibitions of Peek's paintings and artists' books include the Contemporary Museum of Art in Prato, Italy; the University of California, Berkeley; University of California, San Diego and the Oakland Museum.



NICOLAS POUSSIN (attributed) (b. 1594)
Promised Land, 1650s
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of Odd Nerdrum, Norway

Nomadic herdsmen traverse a lush landscape, moving towards distant blue hills with their belongings strapped to the tops of animals. The male figure wears a bright blue tunic, probably signifying that he is nobility.

Artist and educator Odd Nerdrum saw this painting before you, now titled *Promised Land*, being sold at auction; it was then attributed to Salvator Rosa. Upon closer examination, he noticed that the head of one of the figures could not have been by made by Rosa's hand. He was intrigued and purchased the painting. The Nerdrum family believe that it is a composition telling the story of the migration of Abraham, Sarah and the newborn Isaac. One of their attribution points is the claim that the same model portrayed in the roll of Abraham can be seen in other Poussin paintings. Nerdrum began investigating and studied the two-volume book on Nicholas Poussin by Anthony Blunt. He determined that the paint handling in this particular landscape, especially the quality of the glaze in the trees and mountains is typical of small paintings by Poussin. Nerdrum admits that it is a somewhat awkward picture for Poussin, as there are no Greek ruins in the composition.

Nerdrum believes that this painting was probably made around 1650 and was likely overpainted in 1800 in preparation to sell the painting at auction in London. At that time in history, Salvator Rosa was the highest prized master in the world.



ASTRID PRESTON (b. 1945)
Mountain Path, 1989
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of Craig Krull Gallery

Born in Stockholm, Sweden, Preston currently resides in Santa Monica, California. Preston has long explored and invented new frontiers of an aesthetic naturalism, elegantly remaking urban and rural wildness into provocative, soul satisfying tapestries of life and parkland utopias. Her work is in many public and private collections including The Laguna Museum of Art, Long Beach Museum of Art, UCLA's Hammer Museum, The Oakland Museum and Nevada Museum of Art.

She received an NEA Fellowship Grant in Painting in 1987. Preston has exhibited in galleries and museums throughout the United States and in Asia, and her work is held in many public and private collections including the Orange County Museum of Art, the Long Beach Museum of Art, the UCLA Hammer Museum, The Oakland Museum, Nevada Museum of Art and the Fort Wayne Museum of Art. Articles and reviews of Preston's work have been published in the *LA Times*, *Art in America* and *Artforum*. She lives and works in Santa Monica, where the Craig Krull Gallery represents her work.



ARON WIESENFELD (b. 1972)
Bloom, 2014
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of the artist

Aron Wiesenfeld, is a San Diego based painter whose works are rooted in rituals and folk tales that channel primal notions of otherness, heroism, and magic. Stories are revealed out of the silent darkness in the images, and viewers become co-authors. Aron studied at Cooper Union in New York and continued his studies at Art Center in Pasadena, CA. His work has appeared in publications including: *Hi-Fructose*, *Art In America*, and *The Huffington Post*. The Long Beach Museum of Art, Bakersfield Museum of Art, and The Museum Casa Dell'Architettura in Italy are among his many exhibition venues both nationally and abroad. Weisenfeld's paintings have become covers of several books of poetry, including *The Other Sky*, a collaborative book project with poet Bruce Bond. In 2014, IDW Press published a large monograph of his work titled *The Well*.



ROBIN F. WILLIAMS (b. 1984)
The Gardeners, 2013
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of the artist and P.P.O.W. Gallery, New York City

Williams was born in Columbus, Ohio and began making paintings before she learned to sign her name. Robin Williams is based in Brooklyn, New York and is a Rhode Island School of Design graduate. She has had solo exhibitions in New York with Jack the Pelican Presents, and P.P.O.W. Gallery where she is currently represented. Group exhibitions include Driscoll Babcock, Sargent's Daughters, Bravin Lee Programs and the Wassaic Project. In 2010, she was selected as the Spring Playbill Artist for the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and in 2011 she was awarded a fellowship at the MacDowell Colony. She is currently working toward her next solo exhibition.



THEODORE WORES (1859-1939)
Rinconada Hills, Los Gatos, 1922
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of W. Donald Head, Old Grandview Ranch, Saratoga, California

In this painting, Theodore Wores takes us up a road into the flowering hills above the early developments of this Arcadian village. Wores (1859–1939) was one of the leading California painters of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century; he is the first native-born, major San Franciscan artist. He began his formal training at the School of Design in 1874, departing a year later to study art in Munich where he met James McNeill Whistler and began a lifelong friendship. In 1881, he returned to San Francisco, joined the Bohemian Club and set up his studio in the Mercantile Library Building adjacent to his friend, artist William Keith.

Wores was one of the first artists to depict San Francisco's Chinatown. He was named dean of the San

Francisco Art Institute, formerly the San Francisco School of Design, which he directed 1907–1913. In his later years he painted landscapes of the areas near his country home, a converted church in Saratoga, dividing his time between a residence in San Francisco and Saratoga until his death in San Francisco in 1939 at age 80.



JASON YARMOSKY (b. 1987)
Counting Sheep, 2016
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of the artist

Jason Yarmosky lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. Yarmosky pushes the conceptual boundaries of traditional portrait painting and drawing by focusing on aging subjects, in contrast to the historical glorification of youth. His artistic work, classically rendered and theatrically composed, examines the complexities of the aging experience and explores questions of memory, time, and mortality revealed in the tension between the physical and psychological transformations endured by his subjects. Jason has been working with his grandparents as subject matter since 2010, when he graduated with a BFA from the School of Visual Arts in New York

City. His paintings and drawings have been exhibited and collected internationally and his work has been featured in numerous publications. He is the past winner of the Elizabeth Greenshields Award.

CONTRIBUTOR BIOGRAPHIES

ET IN ARCADIA EGO: CONTEMPORARY RENDERINGS ESSAY

DONALD KUSPIT (b. 1935), distinguished American art critic, earned his Ph.D.'s in philosophy from the University of Frankfurt and in Art History from the University of Michigan. In the 1970s, he began writing for *Artforum*, and *Art in America*. He worked as the A.D. White Professor at Large at Cornell University from 1991-1997. Some of his major written work includes: *Clement Greenberg: Art Critic* (1979), *The Cult of the Avant-Garde Artist* (1993), *Health and Happiness in Twentieth Century Avant-Garde Art* (1996), *Redeeming Art: Critical Reveries* (2000), and *The End of Art* (2004). His awards include a Lifetime Achievement Award for Distinguished Contribution to Visual Arts from the National Association of Schools of Art and Design, the College Art Association's Frank Jewett Mather Award for Distinction in Art Criticism, as well as fellowships from the Ford Foundation, the Fulbright Commission, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Guggenheim Foundation.

INTRODUCTION AND SECTION TEXTS

DAVID MOLESKY (b. 1977) is a Brooklyn-based painter, writer, curator, and lecturer. Molesky was born in Washington DC and received his BA from UC Berkeley in 1999. Over the past 25 years, Molesky has painted a variety of subject matter in oils, including turbulent seawater, forest fires, archetypal narratives, and most recently riots. These paintings have been featured in numerous museum exhibitions including: the Baltimore Museum of Art; Pasinger Fabrik, Munich, Germany; and the Long Beach Museum of Art. Molesky's paintings are part of permanent museum collections on both coasts and in Europe. For the last five years, Molesky has contributed feature articles to several art publications and is a regular contributor to Juxtapoz Magazine, the worlds most widely circulated art publication.

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS

SPONSORS TO THE EXHIBITION

Waitte Foundation

Borgenight Foundation

GALLERIES & PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

Andrea Schwartz Gallery

Cara Gallery

Catharine Clark Gallery

W. Donald Head, Old Grandview
Ranch, Saratoga, California

The Innes Collection

Odd Nerdrum

P.P.O.W.

Brian Wannamaker

MEDIA SPONSOR

Juxtapoz Magazine

CATALOG SPONSORS

Andrea Schwartz Gallery,
Steve Dolan and Andrea Schwartz

Winfield Gallery

The Alarm Company, Inc.

Rita Boren, Broker Associate, Sereo Group

Los Gatos Music & Arts

Rabbit Office Automation

Terry J. Martin Associates, AIA