

Miguel Arzabe
Jessica Cannon
Saskia Fleishman
Michelle A M Miller

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Desire Lines

Curated by Kate Mothes

May 25 — July 13, 2024

Opening Reception: Saturday, June 1, 5–8 pm

Free and open to the public | Artists in attendance

“We treat desire as a problem to be solved...though often it is the distance between us and the object of desire that fills the space in between with the blue of longing. I wonder sometimes whether with a slight adjustment of perspective it could be cherished as a sensation on its own terms, since it is as inherent to the human condition as blue is to distance?”

—Rebecca Solnit
A Field Guide to Getting Lost

Shaped by our values and desires, landscape does not exist without human vision. Both physically and symbolically, our yearning for the enlightenment of discovery and connection—the aspiration to see what’s over the mountain or just around the next bend in the road—molds our perception of beauty.

If one definition of landscape implies a painterly, aesthetic experience that is often rural and idyllic, another interpretation synonymizes the term with “environment,” “surroundings,” or “place”—all so broad as to encompass almost any scene in any part of the world. Myriad layers of human presence, historical significance, lighting and weather conditions, natural landforms, flora and fauna, and more, weave a tapestry of physical, emotional, and psychological ties to the land. And the land itself—its visible features—represent a longing for wholeness, inextricable from our sense of being in the world.

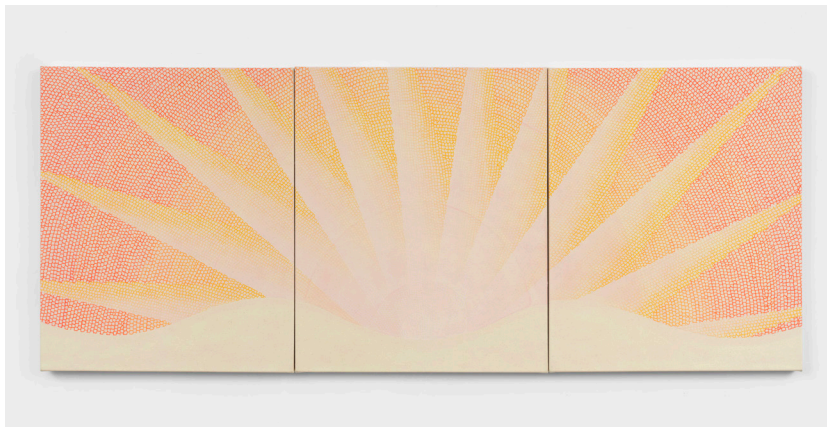
For the artists in *Desire Lines*, landscape takes literal, metaphorical, and metaphysical forms. Themes of heritage, memory, space, and movement coalesce in a grouping in which each artist finds themselves on some kind of journey. Whether recycling organic matter to produce drawing materials, exploring one’s own thoughts and impulses, calling on snapshots from travels, or delving into ancestral and cultural traditions, the terrain investigated here manifests as an array of conduits to new perspectives.

For Saskia Fleishman, landscape serves as a channel for memories, derived from countless snapshots taken of fields, skies, seas, and mountains during her travels. She applies acrylic mixed with sand to digitally-printed chiffon, masking areas to create enigmatic shapes or portals that seem to blur into the distance or the fuzzy recesses of the mind.

Fleishman’s scenes appear to float away from the wall when light illuminates the supports behind the sheer fabric, changing as one moves around the work and calling attention to the ethereality of memory, which may only be grasped for an instant. Her paintings are often characterized by the effervescent hues of sunset and sunrise or the contrast of light and shadows, ground and sky, the present and past.



Saskia Fleishman, *Sedona (February 2023)*, 2023, acrylic and locally sourced sand on digitally printed chiffon, 31.5 x 23.5 in. (80 x 59.7 cm)



Jessica Cannon, *Pink Pleats, Red Arch*, 2024, acrylic and iridescent pigments on canvas, 24 x 60 in. (61 x 152.4 cm)

In Jessica Cannon's paintings, patterns radiate from central foci evocative of daybreak over a distant horizon. Read in another way, the gradient beams meld into near total abstraction, evoking a meditative awareness of consciousness or spiritual awakening. These "inner worlds," both expressed in the formal composition and through her labor-intensive process of sketching and color-testing, are shaped by light, space, geometry, and lived experiences.

Cannon's glowing paintings evoke the spiritualist meditations of Agnes Pelton or Emma Kunz, whose atmospheric depictions of space and depth met sacred geometry and expressions of energy and movement, both in the mind and as a visual representation of energy.



Miguel Arzabe, *La Jaguar Alada*, 2023, woven acrylic on canvas and linen, 80 x 54 in. (203.2 x 137.2 cm)

Miguel Arzabe explores the nature of painting itself through a process of destruction and reconstruction, beginning with an abstract image on a traditional canvas, then cutting it down into numerous strips. He weaves these strips together to create tapestry-like surfaces evocative of the vibrant fiber arts of Bolivia, where he traces his family roots. In some works, spectral elements of the original painting merge with recognizable, traditional textile motifs from the region, like the condor. In others, the shapes transform into abstract suggestions of mountains, clouds, or other animals.

Arzabe intentionally combines Western European art historical practices with craft traditions prevalent in the Andes as a way of reevaluating the artistic contributions of non-European, Indigenous cultures to the canon. Arzabe distorts his original references by weaving them into new scenes, melding distant geographies, artistic practices, and cultural heritage into new landscapes.

In the Project Room, Michelle A M Miller's meticulous works on paper are derived from the land itself—and the sea. Dense, handmade paper provides a bed for geometric shapes rendered in crushed oyster shells, ash from burnt wood scraps, graphite, beeswax, and other natural materials. Miller's approach is often cyclical, as old drawings are sometimes recycled into new works.



Michelle A M Miller, *Ouyll*, 2021, oyster shell, wood ash, and graphite on handmade recycled paper, 12.25 x 8.6 in. (31.1 x 21.8 cm)

Evocative of moth wings or butterfly chrysalides, Miller's pieces evoke continual metamorphosis, drawing on deep emotion and personal experiences of grief in a mesmerizing, contemplative process. Her shaped pieces float off the wall, casting shadows that lend the effect of a winged specimen display, a series of talismans, or capsules of energy made visible. Miller suggests that, like nature or landscape, our experience of art is ephemeral, constantly informed by change.

Text by Kate Mothes

About Miguel Arzabe

Miguel Arzabe makes colorful and dynamic abstractions—weavings, paintings, videos. He starts by finding outdated beauty in paper ephemera from art shows, modernist paintings, and discarded audio recordings. They are methodically analyzed, deconstructed, and reverse-engineered. Drawing inspiration from the cultural techniques and motifs of his Andean heritage, Arzabe weaves the fragments together revealing uncanny intersections between form and content, the nostalgic and the hard-edged, failure and recuperation.

Arzabe lives in Oakland and is a charter studio member at Minnesota Street Project in San Francisco. He had recent solo shows at Shulamit Nazarian Gallery (Los Angeles, CA) and Johansson Projects (Oakland, CA). Arzabe's work has been featured in such festivals as Hors Pistes (Centre Pompidou, Paris), Festival du Nouveau Cinéma (Montreal), and the Geumgang Nature Art Biennale (Gongju, South Korea); and in museums and galleries including MAC Lyon (France), MARS Milan (Italy), RM Projects (Auckland), FIFI Projects (Mexico City), Marylhurst University (Oregon), the Contemporary Jewish Museum, Berkeley Art Museum, the CCA Wattis Institute, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Arzabe's work is held in public collections such as Albuquerque Museum of Art, Oakland Museum of California, the de Young Museum, San Francisco Arts Commission, the State of California, as well as numerous private collections.

He has attended many residencies including Facebook AIR, Headlands Center for the Arts, Montalvo Arts Center, Millay Arts, and Santa Fe Art Institute. He holds a BS from Carnegie Mellon University, an MS from Arizona State University, and an MFA from UC Berkeley. In 2022, Arzabe was awarded the San Francisco Bay Area Artadia Award. In 2023, he was awarded a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant and a Golden Foundation Residency.

About Jessica Cannon

Jessica Cannon was born in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn, in 1979. She received a BA from Tufts University and an MFA from Parsons School of Design, and she currently teaches Drawing and Painting at CUNY Queens College. Selected solo exhibitions include *Veils* at Polina Berlin Gallery (New York, NY), *The Spiral Path* at Winston's (Los Angeles, CA), and *Rapid Cycle* at Honey Ramka (Brooklyn, NY). Recent group exhibitions include *Fresh Nature* at Kutlesa Gallery (Goldau, Switzerland), *Soft Focus* at Superzoom (Paris, France—presented by Polina Berlin), *Double Up* at My Pet Ram (Santa Barbara, CA), *Jung Lovers* (Soloway, Brooklyn), and *Master Class: Color* at The Manes Center for Contemporary Art (Roslyn, NY).

She is a past recipient of The Brooklyn Arts Council's Community Arts Fund Grant and a recent resident at Jentel Foundation in Banner, WY, and at RAIr's Historic Studios in Roswell, NM. Select press and publications include: *The New York Times*, *Flaunt Magazine*, *phaidon.com*, *Maake Magazine*, *New American Paintings*, *Dovetail Magazine*, *Quest Magazine*, and *Hyperallergic*.

In Fall 2017, Jessica founded Far By Wide, an ongoing series of exhibitions online and in pop-up spaces to support social and environmental justice organizations.

About Saskia Fleishman

Saskia Fleishman (b. 1995, Baltimore, MD) graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2017 with a BFA in Painting. Her paintings offer a metaphysical connection to the world by preserving the spirit of the landscape where she is from and other natural places she has spent time in, honoring the transient nature of life while acknowledging the eternal relationship we have to the universe, in hopes of finding transcendence and harmony.

She has been an artist in residence at The Jentel Foundation, Tongue River Artist Residency, Vermont Studio Center, Wassaic Project, PADA Studios, ChaNorth, and Trestle Studios, and a curator in residence at Otis College of Art and Design. Fleishman's work has been exhibited at Galleri Urbane (Dallas, TX), Red Arrow (Nashville, TN), Pentimenti Gallery (Philadelphia, PA), Dinner Gallery (New York, NY), Unit London (London, UK), Goucher College (Baltimore, MD), and The Museum of Contemporary Art (Arlington, VA), among others. Her work has been featured in *Make Magazine*, *ArtMaze*, *Root Quarterly*, *Friend of the Artist*, and *Galerie Magazine*. Saskia is based in Philadelphia, PA.

About Michelle A M Miller

Michelle A M Miller is a multidisciplinary artist whose creative work spans drawing, writing, bookmaking, sculpture, painting, printmaking, installation, and public art. She has been awarded residencies at Women's Studio Workshop, Atlantic Center for the Arts, and IS Projects, and she is a grantee of the Puffin Foundation. Her work has been presented at Booksmart, CODEX, E/AB, NADA Miami, and she has participated in group exhibitions at the Coral Springs Museum of Art, Florida Atlantic University, and the Art and Culture Center/Hollywood. Her work is held in public and private collections throughout the US. Miller received her BFA in Studio Art from Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, and her BA in Art History from Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. She lives and works in West Palm Beach, Florida.

About Kate Mothes

Kate Mothes (b. 1985, Tillamook, Oregon) is a curator, art writer, and founder of Young Space, a contemporary art platform emphasizing emerging artists. She is also the founder and editor of *Dovetail Magazine*, a publication connecting contemporary art to ideas around place, and a contributing editor for *Colossal*.

She has curated numerous exhibitions around the U.S. and Europe, including *Hangama Amiri: Henna Night/Shabe Kheena* at David B. Smith Gallery, Denver (2022); *Rose Tint* at Tiger Strikes Asteroid NY, Brooklyn (2021); *MIRROR EYE* in collaboration with Far x Wide at Ortega y Gasset Projects, Brooklyn (2020); *Yulia Iosilzon: Paradeisos* at CARVALHO PARK, Brooklyn (2019); *Dreamboat* at Real Tinsel, Milwaukee (2019); *Run Straight Through* at Torrance Art Museum, Torrance, CA (2019); *Wolves By the Road* at Assembly House, Leeds (2019); *I could go on forever* at PADA Studios, Lisbon (2019); *BIG LINK* (2018) and *Settling the Ghost* (2017) at Standard Projects in Hortonville, WI, and many more.

Mothes holds a Masters in the History of Art from the University of Edinburgh and a Bachelors in Art History from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. She pursues a nomadic practice with a home base in Northeast Wisconsin.

About David B. Smith Gallery

David B. Smith Gallery is committed to presenting intelligent and culturally relevant exhibitions in its Denver location, featuring the region's most important emerging talent alongside internationally recognized artists. Through its curatorial program, participation in art fairs, and extensive media coverage in publications such as *Artforum*, *Art in America*, and *ARTnews*, David B. Smith Gallery has cultivated a strong regional, national and international collector audience. *The New York Times* hailed the gallery as offering "an exciting contrast of cutting edge works." The gallery also maintains an active publishing division, which produces exhibition catalogues and editions.

David B. Smith Gallery is a member of the New Art Dealers Alliance (NADA).

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