

Marlborough

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L.C. Armstrong / Central Park Paintings

February 13 - March 16, 2013

The Directors of Marlborough Gallery are pleased to announce that an exhibition of recent work by the painter L.C. Armstrong, entitled *Central Park Paintings*, will open on February 13 and continue through March 16, 2013. Comprised of approximately 12 paintings executed in Armstrong's signature technique of vibrant acrylic paint layered with a thick coat of resin on linen on panel, the exhibition features fantastical landscapes that explore the surprises and whimsies of New York's Central Park.

From the 12 foot-long triptych to the intimate 20 x 16 inch single panels, Armstrong's compositions teem with humans, animals, and exotic flowers coexisting in a dreamlike utopia. She remarked that, "Central Park is surreal; every visitor brings their own unique view on life." In *Daydream on the Green*, the artist presents the rolling, lush fields of Sheep's Meadow, with an accurate recreation of the Midtown-West skyline in the background and vibrant, seductive flowers superimposed on the foreground. The figures that populate the meadow range delightfully from sunbathers and a bride and groom, to penguins, sheep, walruses, pigs and peacocks, among other wild creatures. Despite the surreal ambience, Armstrong points out that the scenes she depicts are inspired by factuality. In the 19th century sheep were put to pasture in the park to keep the grass trimmed, and pigs were set free in the street as a primitive form of trash removal. And, it is not unheard of for a peacock to escape the Central Park Zoo.

Armstrong has named the British novelist Lawrence Durrell as an influence on her work, citing his quote, "We are all children of our own landscape." Armstrong's landscapes are a composite of her artistic heritage, which ranges from 19th-century art to the custom car garages of Los Angeles: "Influences in my work begin with the Northern Romantic Landscape artists Caspar David Friedrich and Philip Runge through the Hudson River School and Luminists such as John F. Kensett and Martin Johnson Heade, to the westerns of John Ford with the lone figure in the sunset, through pop album covers and van murals, to California artists like Minimalist John McCracken, whose studio was a few miles from my father's neon sign shop."

These influences are apparent in another exhibited work, *Bow Bridge Boaters*, in which the viewer peers through a screen of sunflowers and daisies to glimpse the tiny boaters on the pond,

with a lush proliferation of fiery fall foliage in the background. In a whimsical twist, Armstrong has populated the boats with figures from art history and popular culture rather than with tourists. Holly Golightly, John Singer Sargeant's Madame X, a couple from Manet's 1874 painting *Boating*, and Sir Joshua Reynolds's 1782 portrait of Captain George Coussmaker paired unexpectedly with a Native American, all float along in perfect harmony. The art historian Luanne McKinnon has remarked, "...Armstrong's landscapes are painted in a high-pitched chroma, the surfaces are high-gloss, almost reflective in their perfected finish ... taken altogether, color and surface, her environs seem literally sealed as if the fantasies into which we gaze are both product and crystal ball."

Born in Humbolt, Tennessee, Armstrong completed two degrees from Pasadena's Art College Center of Design and San Francisco's Art Institute, while customizing vans, motorcycles, airplanes and hot rod cars, perfecting her technique and supporting herself through school. In 1991, Armstrong was the recipient of a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant and in that same year her work was included in The Corcoran Biennial. After her first solo show in Cologne, Germany in 1991, Armstrong exhibited at White Columns in 1992 and over the next fifteen years with galleries in New York, Washington, Frankfurt and Paris. An exhibition of her large paintings, *L.C. Armstrong: The Paradise Triptychs*, was held at The Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Winter Park, FL, from September through December 2008.

Armstrong's work has been included in a number of significant thematic exhibitions, including *Twisted: Urban and Visionary Landscapes in Contemporary Painting* at the Van Abbe Museum in The Netherlands in 2000; *Open House*, at the Brooklyn Museum and *Flower Power*, Musée des Beaux Arts, Lille, both in 2004; *POPulence*, at the Blaffer Gallery, The Art Museum of the University of Houston, TX in 2005; *Revising Arcadia*, at the Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Winter Park, FL and *Garden Paradise*, at the Arsenal Gallery, Central Park, New York, both in 2006. Her work is in the permanent collections of the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; Harvard University, Cambridge; The Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City and the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC, among others.

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