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**NATURAL CATASTROPHES**

**NEW ANGLES ON LANDSCAPE**

**NOAH PURIFOY**

**LARRY BELL**

**SEATTLE SPOTLIGHT**

**SANTA FE COLOR**

**ENRIQUE CELAYA**

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"THE FLOWERS, IT GETS BETTER," 2014, **Crystal Liu**  
GOUACHE, INK AND WATERCOLOR ON PAPER  
43 3/4" x 30 1/2"

PHOTO: COURTESY THE ARTIST AND HOSFELT GALLERY

emotional states referencing familial or romantic relationships. Further clues are noted in the titles of many of the pieces: phrases like *it's just a dream* and *smothered*. Liu uses plant imagery and nature as an analogy for growth, transformation and ultimately life itself, drawing from the passing night sky, water elements and trees. Certain protagonists are consistent characters in the bittersweet and foreboding works, including the moon, responsible for the tides, and white chrysanthemums, symbols of mourning and healing of loss in Chinese culture. The pieces are stunningly contemplative and accented with golden metallic elements throughout. The poetic repetition lends a luxurious glister that appears synonymous with antique gilded fine porcelain used for the home on special occasions. Several works have particularly touching narratives. In *the moon*, "merge" (2015), a bare tree with white bark is being pushed down toward its reflection in a pool of dark water; the tangled branches seem anthropomorphized, like hands with grasping fingers. Across the room, *the flowers*, "down pour" (all 2014-2015) features white mums cascading toward a deep brown mound. The mums are painted with matte white gouache and outlined petal by petal with black ink. Thousands of gold dots and a washy effervescence pour down, splashing the pale grey background. Stark black leaves bend behind the white and gold, adding a formal contrast to the billowing, expressive mums. In comparison, the seeming companion piece, *the flowers*, "it gets better," includes two large mums on a bed of soft black calligraphic ink foliage pointed with the same black leaves; this time, only a few clusters of golden brown pods sprinkle down. Meanwhile *the flowers*,

"*breathe in*," features only one giant mum facing the viewer—large clear gold dots (or perhaps tiny moons) shine in the foreground, the golden brown a mere pool by its side. Most striking are her works from *the lake* series: captivating gold pointillistic cloud-like masses with silhouetted mums on navy blue watercolor limpid fields.

Liu's new work is a sophisticated change from her previous use of fragmented Rococo patterns, shifting toward distinct and self-contained compositions with very particular personal stories. However shrouded in breathtaking beauty, the works are distinctly powerful in their ability to lock in the sublime and a sense of longing, which proves meaningful to anyone.

—LEORA LUTZ

#### OAKLAND

##### **Evan Holm: "The River Made No Sound" at Vessel Gallery**

With California in the third year of a record-breaking drought, Evan Holm's "The River Made No Sound" could strike a tender nerve, yet instead manages to convey a largely soothing feeling, offering hypnotic sounds and images that engage us in much the same way as actual natural phenomena. Holm presented two separate installations, *Cloud/Clock* (all works 2015) housed on Vessel Gallery's first floor, and *Forest Pools* upstairs, accompanied by a series of process-based watercolors on panel from the artist's *Watermark* series. *Forest Pools*, at 78 feet long, bisects Vessel's long, already narrow second story gallery, with inky pools comprised of rectangular wooden trays of liquid, fitted together to form a continuous level surface, housing a construction formed of oak and poplar wheels, tree branches, unspooled cassette tape and mechanical components—an assemblage part Rube Goldberg, part Andy Goldsworthy. Massive hand-tooled wooden wheels spin, their motion activated by contact with the cassette tape feeding through partially disassembled players, filling the gallery with music and other sound. Holm's layout of the trays is in itself an interesting, Mondrian-like arrangement of squares and rectangles. Soulful and meditative instrumental and vocal tracks play as the tape gently dips into the sumi ink-laced water. An earlier work in a similar vein, *Submerged Turntables* (2012), engineered to actually play vinyl records underwater, was installed at SFMOMA shortly before it closed doors for its three-year remodel.

Downstairs, *Cloud/Clock* offers aerial layers of lacy, flat wooden platforms, their angular shapes evoking clouds in a Japanese print, suspended by stainless steel wire. Baker's flour, sifted from above, floats on the surface, while wooden wheels and tape player components below, here mimicking the

"FOREST POOLS," 2015, **Evan Holm**  
HAND-TURNED OAK AND POPLAR WHEELS,  
SUMI INK, ELECTRONICS AND TAPE CASSETTE,  
OAK BRANCHES, STEEL, 78' x 9' x 13'  
PHOTO: LONNIE LEE, COURTESY VESSEL GALLERY

gears of a clock, create a subtle sound piece. A thick layer of flour coats the floor, resembling white sand; six-hundred pounds of baker's flour were incorporated in all.

On the opening night, the artist presented a remarkable performance combining tape loops with live accompaniment including cellist Alexandra Stefans, wife Karuna Holm on backup vocals and her nephew Kiva Schweig, at 10 years old singing powerful covers of Nina Simone and Mavis Staples. Holm, clearly multi-talented and somewhat of a visionary, has executed these quirky and complex installations with obsessive attention to detail and a focus on their meditative core. With parched clouds and a mute river as haunting symbols, this poetic work sounds a gentle wake-up call to aspire to a more conscious presence on our planet.

—BARBARA MORRIS

#### PHOENIX

##### **Eddie Shea: "Krivanek" and Denise Yaghmourian: "Fragile Life" at Modified Arts**

Denise Yaghmourian's mixed-media pieces and Eddie Shea's oil paintings complement each other through a like-mindedness about using common materials and tropes yet asking for the utmost in viewers' intellectual engagement. As two longtime Phoenix artists, Yaghmourian and Shea prove to be a great yin and yang in concurrent solo shows partially supported by the arts incubator the Phoenix Institute of Contemporary Art, or phiCA.

Two of Yaghmourian's installations take center stage. *Skeleton Cubes* (all works 2015) is a gently swirling mass of small translucent cubes that dangle from the ceiling at various heights. Made from sewn skeleton leaves and sprouting long curled threads, the 40-odd cubes spark thoughts of strange swimming creatures, despite the connection to foliage. The second installation also amazes through its transformation of materials. Suspended

