

Julia Vandepolder
Truth in Beauty

The Pear Tree & Two Red tulips, October 2017, oil on canvas, private collection

Julia Vandepolder *Truth in Beauty*

There is an island off the coast of Northumberland called The Holy Island of Lindisfarne. "Holy Island" as it is commonly known, is a tidal island, linked to the mainland by a long causeway, and twice a day the tide sweeps in from the North Sea and conceals its path.

In the 1940's at Central Saint Martin's School, London, U.K. David Bomberg would drive a new expressionist painting style - bridging inner spirit and outer nature, he developed a practice that was predominantly intuitive and kinesthetic. Leon Kossoff and Frank Auerbach would take painting classes under his tutelage and press further. Julia Vandepolder's paintings push up against these artists as she vigorously captures the ever-shifting views within the window frame. Insistent and vivid, she goes beyond pleasing the senses to a rush of clarity, paint surrendering its mere material element in its search for truth in beauty.

"when I consider everything that grows/ Holds in perfection but a little moment".¹



Carnations 9, 2018, oil on canvas

The tide ebbs and flows in its endless cycle and at times reveals the causeway lying under the sea, and the pathway to the Holy Island. Similarly Vandepolder engages in the laborious practice of scraping and reapplying paint until the final image emerges. In a process of constant revision she hopes to reveal a world of fact and experience that hasn't been caught before, so that it is remade, in a sense, and speaks to oneself.

Truth in Beauty is a selection of paintings by Julia Vandepolder, created over the last two years. This solo exhibition features two complimentary bodies of work; a series of twelve large scale views from a window which combine landscape and still life painting and a series of smaller scale portraits of flowers arranged in interior spaces. Vandepolder's paintings are inspired by the intimate world around her, captured moments transcribed in paint, the beauty she finds around her - summer descending into fall, light pouring into an interior space passing from daytime into night, a sensual theatre of the spiritual.

Irene MacCreadie

1. <http://www.shakespeare-online.com/sonnets/15.html>

Carnations 1, 2018, oil on canvas



Offering us a sly promise of the real world, Julia Vandepolder's new paintings suspend us amicably in a unique and virtual space. Neither in nor out, an impossibility of choices, they deliver us repeatedly to the meticulous painted surface.

In the larger works, Pear Trees, physical tensions appear to stretch window frames curving them dramatically away from the viewer, they render the certainty of architecture impossibly plastic. We follow the artists view, sight becoming a powerful tool, the multiplicity of focus points reminds us of the gift of vision, embedding in material a sensation of the stereoscopic. As viewers we become locked in loops of searching inquiry seeing image and surface simultaneously, never fully losing consciousness of the other. The strong vertical orientations of the larger work positions the viewer intriguingly: the changing season's parade by us slowly, yet the narrow format, offers a faster psychologically charged glimpse of the outside world. Crane as we might, the vantage point is centralized and holds both the closest marker of wood and ostensibly, the point of greatest visual distance; the view through the gate to the street. Compromised by the cross of window grilles, it is a bullseye of magical proposition, holding glass we cannot see but know is there, confirming our expectations, but impossibly supporting the tensions and illusions. Sometimes bursting forth in luminosity, sometimes retreating from obvious view, always revealing in comparison, the shifting eye of the painter. The storm windows remind us we are inside the inside. Where is the painter? Why are we so close? Are we actually further removed by a technology of viewing, a Claude Glass warping, this surreal trompe l'oeil affect, persuades us that all is illusion, metaphysical theatrics, It's about looking isn't it.

It is in the central conceit of inside/ outside, the internal and external, mirroring a painters subject and object relations, long explored in art, that historically situates the work. Echoing the solemnity of Danish artist, Vilhelm Hammershoi {1864-1916}, we inhabit the quiet internal life of the house yet we actually see none of it. If as Gaston Bachelard proposes in his influential Poetics of Space "The house is an instrument with which to confront the cosmos" We share the artist struggle in "realizing ones sensations" within the house which is acting as both protection for and extension of the artist. In a grander existential struggle, registered uniquely in these works we are resolutely in but straining to get out, always searching, making do, starting again.



Lilacs (white and purple), 2017, oil on canvas

The artist is the performer in this threshold state and allows us to experience both in and out, but never fully resting in either. In this pursuit, the Pear Tree just outside the window, becomes a stolid double, an outlier, with branches darting freely in the viscous air mass, analogous to the movement of our eyes across the painted surface. Paradoxically it is no freer than artist is or viewer in this world always anchored stage right.

Only in "House on Serson Avenue", does the tension relax and like Matisse's mediterranean interiors, summer comes rushing in the open doors, filling the house in a remarkable luminous warmth. It is inside, without distraction, that the changing cast of Fuller Dishes, Wild Flowers and Sugar Bowls come to life. These windowsill companions seem freer to perform for us, malleable; a fluidity overtakes them that threatens to erase their boundaries. Like a Frank Auerbach portrait, they contain inner geometries, yet relieved of the existential sensations of the larger work they amiably morph in liquid matter, an inner nature set free.

Through a seamless marriage of surface and illusion, collapsing abstract and representational tendencies into an energetic visual coherency, Julia Vandepolder is able to integrate a vital life energy into the picture plane. The accumulation of paint, its slathered ease and textural presence create felt tensions. Vandepolder religiously premixes a large spectrum of paint to work with and it is through a restless blending of pure colours that chromatic greys and violets abound providing another point of poetic investigation. Anchored by architectural structure, they create harmonies but it's also easy to overlook the drama and invention at hand; pinks and purples swimming in uneasy orange brown tones, a sense of chromatic discord lurks.

The vases, bouquets and objects tightly cropped, portrait like become characters. Accumulated the images suggest we are trapped in a comfortable, slightly bohemian world, where peeling paint and porcelain collectibles have some value. The world we inhabit with Julia Vandepolder reminds us of the powers of both home and art, the windows become symbolic crosses, bulwarks against chaos, smattered with ritualistic offerings on the sills. Intentional or not they offer us the home as refuge, an extension of the body and mind that reaches deep within us to set free fears and passions in the world, reminding us that in the right hands, paint remains a unique technology of human expression, unmatched in its ability to merge feeling with matter.

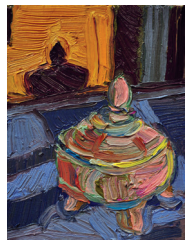
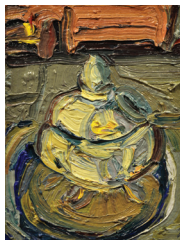
Gary Evans



The House on Serson Ave., 2018, oil on canvas, private collection

Julia Vandepolder (b.1986, Guelph) is an Honours Bachelor of Arts degree graduate from the School of Fine Art and Music at the University of Guelph. Her work has been exhibited at numerous galleries nationally in Toronto, Halifax, Vancouver and Fredericton. Vandepolder has had solo and group exhibitions most recently at Studio 21 Fine Art Gallery, Halifax; Canadian Fine Art Gallery, Toronto; Gallery on Queen Fine Art, Fredericton and Al Green Gallery, Toronto. Her painting was selected as a finalist for the inaugural 2015 Salt Spring National Art Prize in British Columbia. She is the recipient of many awards and grants including the John Hartman Award: MacLaren Art Centre, Shirley Dilworth Jaychuk Painting Award, Ellen Langlands Memorial Award and First Prize Awards at Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery Juried Art Show, Glenhyrst Art Gallery of Brant and John B. Aird Gallery Drawing exhibitions and an Emerging Artist Grant from the Ontario Arts Council. Her paintings are held in private and corporate collections, including the Wellington County Museum and Archives, Colart Collection and BMO Financial Group.

Gary Evans was born in Weston Super Mare, England and lives in Alliston, Ontario. With a career spanning more than two decades, his numerous solo exhibitions include *Seeing Things: The Paintings of Gary Evans*, which toured across Canada, as well as *Station*, a survey of paintings presented at the Art Gallery of Windsor. He has participated in group exhibitions across Canada and internationally at venues including Humber Arts and Media Studios in Etobicoke, ON; Deluge Contemporary, Victoria, BC; the Tina B. Biennial, Prague, Czech Republic; and the Kaoshung Museum of Fine Arts, Taiwan. Evans is a graduate of the Ontario College of Art and Design and is the Coordinator at the School of Design And Visual Art, Georgian College, Barrie, Ontario. He is represented by Paul Petro Contemporary Art in Toronto.



Fuller dish 1, 2, 3, 4, 2017, oil on canvas

Julia Vandepolder *Truth in Beauty*

May 18 – July 15, 2018

Curator Irene MacCreadie
Writer Gary Evans
Design Donna Nolan
Printing CM Design & Print

List of Works

Fuller dish 1, 2, 3, 4, 2017, oil on canvas
Wildflowers 1, 2, 3, 4, 2017, oil on canvas
Lilacs (white and purple), 2017, oil on canvas
Hyacinths 1 (blue), 2017, oil on canvas
Hyacinths 2 (white), 2017, oil on canvas
Hyacinths 3 (pink), 2017, oil on burlap
Elsie sugar dish, 2018, oil on canvas
Elsie creamer, 2018, oil on canvas
Peony blossom, 2017, oil on canvas
Two peony blossoms, 2017, oil on canvas
Sweet rocket, 2017, oil on canvas
Marigolds, 2018, oil on canvas
Lilacs, 2018, oil on canvas
Carnations 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 2018, oil on canvas
The House on Serson Ave., 2018, oil on canvas, private collection
Pear Tree study 1, June afternoon, 2016, oil on canvas
Pear Tree study 2, January afternoon, 2016, oil on canvas
Pear Tree study 3, Spring, 2016, oil on burlap
The Pear Tree 1, Late summer's afternoon, 2016, oil on canvas
The Pear Tree 2, Falls last leaves, 2016, oil on canvas
The Pear Tree 3, Autumn wind and rain, 2017, oil on canvas
The Pear Tree 4, Short day, Long night, 2017, oil on canvas
The Pear Tree 5, After the first Snowfall, 2017, oil on canvas
The Pear Tree 6, Snowfall, 2017, oil on canvas
The Pear Tree 7, Elsie teapot and sugar dish, 2017, oil on canvas, private collection
The Pear Tree 8, Peony blossom in a vase, 2017, oil on canvas
The Pear Tree 9, Two Red tulips, October 2017, oil on canvas, private collection
The Pear Tree 10, A geranium flower and a key, 2017, oil on canvas, private collection
The Pear Tree 11, Yellow marigolds and eyeglasses, 2018, oil on canvas
The Pear Tree 12, Lilacs and pysanka, 2018, oil on canvas



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The Pear Tree 12, Lilacs and pysanka, 2018, oil on canvas