

Boundless Nature: Real and Imagined

September 8 – October 1, 2016

Opening Reception: September 8, 6:00 – 8:00 PM



Roger Brown, *American Sycamore*, 1982. Oil on canvas, 96 x 72 in.

WORK BY

ERIC AHO
ROMARE BEARDEN
ROGER BROWN
CHARLES BURCHFIELD
ROBERT DE NIRO, SR
DAVID DRISKELL
JANET FISH
MARY FRANK
MARSDEN HARTLEY
MARK INNERST
YVONNE JACQUETTE
JOHN MARIN
RALPH EUGENE MEATYARD
CLAIRE SHERMAN
BARBARA TAKENAGA
GEORGE TOOKER
DARREN WATERSTON
JANE WILSON

DC Moore Gallery's new exhibition, *Boundless Nature: Real and Imagined*, explores the remarkable diversity of contemporary and modern landscape painting. Ever since the advent of modernism and abstraction at the beginning of the 20th century, landscape painting has been reinvigorated and reinvented by artists who continually test the boundaries of the genre. Today it is much more of an open process, as many traditional restraints have been cast aside, leaving artists to interpret the landscape as they wish.

With this in mind, three general approaches to landscape painting can be identified in the exhibition. In some cases, the works show an updated concern with realism and representation, charged with a more modern focus. Others are more abstract, using the natural world as a point of departure. And finally, the most experimental are landscapes of the imagination in which natural features such as horizon lines and celestial bodies provide markers or references to the physical world. While the boundaries among the three types are fluid and overlapping, and the definitions are imprecise, they can be helpful in sorting out the range of paintings in the show.

In **Roger Brown's** large-scale *American Sycamore* of 1992, for example, the bold silhouette of a tree is foregrounded, with orange and yellow fall colors behind it, creating patterns that recede into the background. While it would seem that, in this case, Brown was simply captivated by the beauty of nature, it is also true that he often used silhouetted human figures in his work, which is concerned with themes like urban and suburban isolation and alienation, as well as natural disasters and ominous weather patterns, all of which are somehow interconnected through webs of human agency and impact on the environment.

A series of works created by **Romare Bearden** in 1983 is remarkable for his generous and expressive use of paint. Two of them are in this exhibition, *Mecklenburg Autumn: Heat Lightning Eastward* and *Mecklenburg Autumn: September – Sky and Meadow*. The first is a painterly collage of memory images, set in the rural landscape of the North Carolina of his youth. The second is a pure landscape except for a lone figure traversing the forest, in a strongly expressionist work rendered in a fall palette, with a density not unlike that of a tropical rain forest.

Charles Burchfield's *Mist Phantoms at Dawn* of 1960 vibrates with the energy of the rising sun. Bold yellow force lines radiate out from the sun, creating auras around trees and animating the flowering plants in the foreground. An abstracted hillside rises at left, while clouds of mist that blanket the center of the landscape, rising in ghostly shapes that bubble up from an insubstantial source, will soon dissipate in the early morning warmth.

Through the painterly languages of abstraction and representation, **Eric Aho** explores the lived, remembered, and imagined experience of landscape. The most compelling “wilderness” for him is that which is encountered in paint on canvas. His work reconstitutes the observed outer world from the perspective of a personal interior. Memory, stories, and observations vie for primacy, suggesting glimpsed fragments of mountains, fields, water, and woods amidst the extremes of changing seasons.

Barbara Takenaga introduces evocative horizon lines into her abstract exploration of pattern and movement, often evoking natural phenomena and landscapes of the mind. She is primarily an abstract painter, as seen in the radiating dots and swirling mandalas in much of her work. At the same time, her references to the natural world are expansive, from acidic tornadoes, scalding magma, and exploding supernovae that play out on a cosmic scale, to low horizons and endlessly radiating lines suggesting her experience growing up on the plains of Nebraska.



Charles Burchfield, *Mist Phantoms at Dawn*, 1960. Watercolor and charcoal on joined paper, 33 x 39 ¾ in.

DC MOORE GALLERY specializes in contemporary and twentieth-century art. The Gallery is open from Tuesday through Saturday from 10 am to 6 pm. For more information, for photographs, or to arrange a viewing, please call 212-247-2111 or email Rachel Johnson at rjohnson@dcmooregallery.com.