



Katharine
Dufault



Spring Forest, 2021, Oil on panel, 12" x 9"

Katharine Dufault

To Be In The Same World

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Essay by Henry Mandell

THE PAINTING CENTER

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Full Moon Over Quiet Trees, 2020, Oil on linen, 16" x 20"

To Be In The Same World

The selection of recent paintings by Katharine Dufault seen in her solo exhibition at The Painting Center display a deep connection to nature as a source of inspiration. Encountering these quiet confident paintings one can imagine that the title of the exhibition, *To Be In The Same World*, reveals the artist's deep connection to the natural world beyond the mere depiction of nature and that this connection feels both poetic and transcendental.

Dufault demonstrates a skillful and reductive approach to landscape. The results which appear deceptively simple display flattened graphic elements of trees, horizon and sky. It is no easy task to render the deep space of a mountain valley with surrounding hills and attendant cove of trees in a manner that strips the whole scene down to its very bones as seen in *Full Moon On Quiet Trees*. But the viewer is rewarded with Dufault's practice of employing color as content and shape as feeling. The results feel insightful and personal.

These paintings, which cross boundaries into complete abstraction and back again in their pictorial range, speak to the universal and aspirational impact the natural could have on our collective waking and unconscious mind. There is a certain mild invitation for the viewer to enter the scene and fill in the brushwork with one's own content and feeling. That the artist might have felt rapture while encountering a scene out in the wild is of no help to us in seeing what she has seen, or feeling what she has felt. But viewing the paintings she has brought back from her imagination transport us with her in the idealizing desire to hold still in our mind that which cannot be held at all. These pictures are remarkable in their modest power of suggestion.

When considering Dufault's landscape artworks I am reminded of the painter Milton Avery (1885-1965) and his wife the painter Sally Michel (1902-2003) who both expressed their interest in color as content and shape as feeling with their explorations in landscape, still life and portraiture. Their bold reductive and indelible artworks were in turn inspired by Matisse in ways that remove formal distractions in a composition and focus instead on the primacy of form and color. Avery's work had influenced many of the abstract expressionists who championed radical approaches to rendering paintings that were closer to visual poetry than a slavish devotion to literal representation. One can see that legacy of vision here as well.



Morning Gesture, 2020, Oil on panel, 8" x 10"

The title of the exhibition, *To Be In The Same World* is also the name of a poetry anthology by the poet Peter Kane Dufault (1923-2013). His poems were published in significant periodicals and were celebrated and highly regarded yet he remained relatively unknown throughout his career. He was the artist's father-in-law and her familiarity with the poet's work reveals a personal approach to how these paintings might render a visual kind of poetry. The artist has stated her resonance with many of the poems. Such as *Acer Americanus* -

Is this all there is —
a ubiquitous Carbon driving
into the highest forks of the maples
and the highest offices hunting
empires of sunlight and water or money and blood for ballast against the moon?
Or have I been too long under these trees?

Katharine Dufault's deft handling of paint reveals her poetic predilections such as in *Midwinter II*, *Morning Gesture* and *Poet's Walk*, three paintings depicting the structure of trees in striking ways. Although small in scale, *Midwinter II* and *Morning Gesture* present intimate backlit scenes where the simple idea of trees has been transfigured into the sinew of single gestures from a brush, poetry indeed. Larger in scale, *Poet's Walk* presents a harrowing verdant green path through a pink floored forest of bare trees, a di Chirico like space of hard shadows in washes and stripes and bright light, daring us to walk forward and accept whatever fate has waiting beyond.

The Moon appears in a dozen or so of the paintings, as a familiar sojourner halting the motion of the scenes while casting its pale crepuscular illumination. It is a signifier of time, here seen at its fullest yet bound to circle through the sky in phases, moving tides and bodies. We see the moon here again, holding still that which cannot be held within an intimate frame. Ms. Dufault shows us her vision of the natural world as a way to know one's own feelings about existing in that world. That is to say that Ms. Dufault embraces being out there as a means to find one's place within ourselves.

Henry Mandell, 2021, Fine Artist, Project Manager for The Estate of Mark Rothko



Expansive Sky, 2021, Oil on panel, 12" x 9"



River I, 2021, Oil on panel, 30" x 40"



Daily Walk II, 2021, Oil on panel, 12" x 9"



Spring Forest II, 2021, Oil on linen, 30" x 24"



Afternoon Light, 2020, Oil on linen, 24" x 30"



Evening Mountain, 2020, Oil on panel, 16" x 20"



Dawn Mountain I, 2020, Oil on linen, 8" x 10"



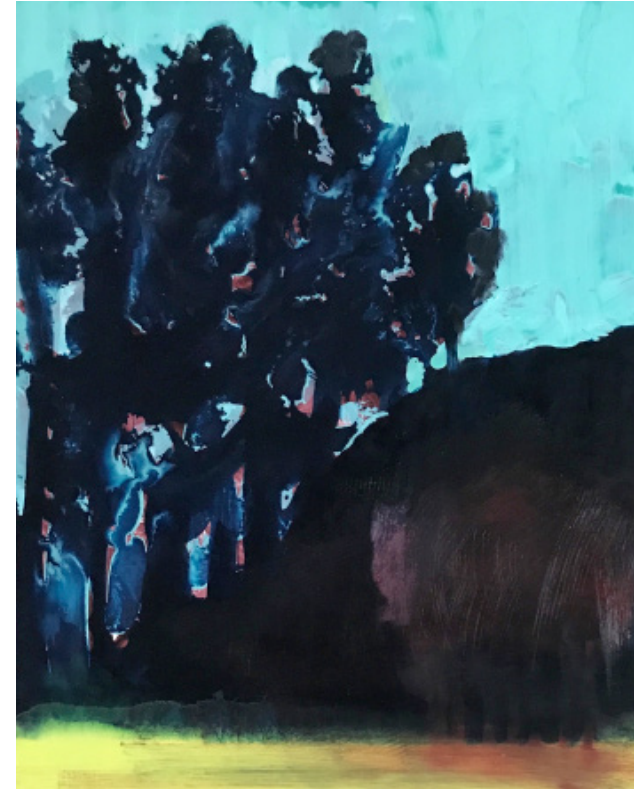
Dawn Mountain II, 2020, Oil on linen, 8" x 10"



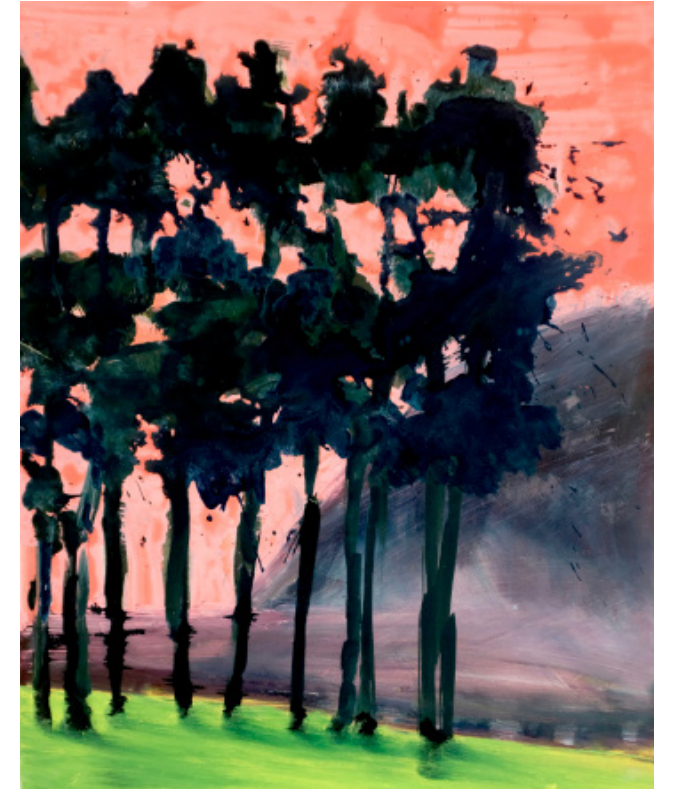
River II, 2021, Oil on canvas, 36" x 46"



Evening Light, 2021, Oil on panel, 24" x 30"



Evening Mountain, 2020, Oil on panel, 20" x 16"



Morning Mountain, 2020, Oil on panel, 20" x 16"



River III, 2021, Oil on panel, 16" x 20"



Lolling, 2013, Oil on canvas, 20" x 23"



Midwinter I, 2020, Oil on panel, 10" x 8"



Tree Portrait, 2021, Oil on linen, 20" x 16"



Three Trees 2021, Oil on panel, 12" x 9"



Red Hat, 2013, Oil on linen, 24" x 20"



Midwinter II, 2020, Oil on panel, 10" x 8"



Night Field, 2021, Oil on linen, 20" x 16"



Poets Walk, 2021, Oil on panel, 40" x 30"



Pink Sky, 2021, Oil on panel, 12" x 9"



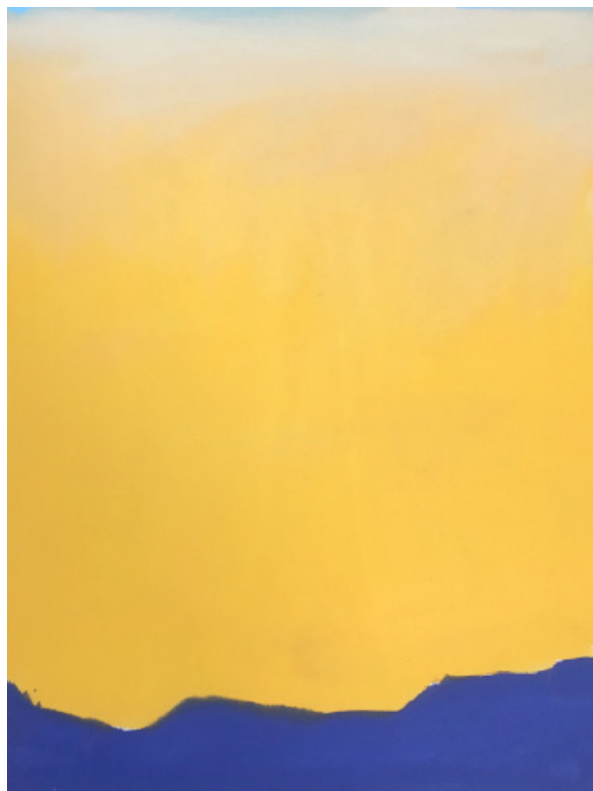
Roe Jan Walk I, 2021, Oil on panel, 12" x 9"



Quiet Mountain, 2020-21, Oil on panel, 16" x 20"



Catskills I, 2021, Oil on panel, 12" x 9"



Catskills II, 2021, Oil on panel, 12" x 9"



Moon River II, 2021, Oil on linen, 16" x 20"



Lake View, 2021, Oil on panel, 8" x 10"



Dawn Mountain III, 2020, Oil on panel, 8" x 10"



Another Sunrise, 2021, Oil on panel, 16" x 20"



Dandelion Meadow II, 2021, Oil on panel, 9" x 12"



Summer Walk III, 2021, Oil on panel, 12" x 9"



Summer Walk II, 2021, Oil on panel, 12" x 9"



Summer Walk I, 2021, Oil on panel, 12" x 9"



Shadow II, 2013, Oil on canvas, 30" x 24"



Red Mountain, 2021, Oil on panel, 30" x 40"

Katharine Dufault

British born Katharine Dufault is a *New York Times* reviewed artist, curator and visual arts consultant. As a multimedia artist, she works in oils, encaustic, printmaking and photography. Dufault graduated with honors from Columbia University, with a degree in painting and literature after studying visual arts, graphic design and photography at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, England. She regularly exhibits her work and has been in numerous shows in New York City, Boston, Ohio, Connecticut, Westchester county, the Berkshires and Cambridge, England. Dufault's work is included in many corporate and private collections. Dufault lives and works in Columbia County, NY and the Berkshires, MA.

Painting is a meditation and a kind of alchemy in which I concentrate and transform my feelings and memories into something material which can be experienced in various ways by others. The recent chaos in my (our) life has made me see - or has caused - a new and strange abstracted order in my painting, challenging all my preconceptions and yet, somehow, aching to be revealed. So, in this recent body of work, I draw on my deep love of nature: the impressions from my new rural life in the Berkshires, earlier years in Westchester adjacent to an estural marshland and my childhood in the Cambridgeshire countryside in England. I want to create paintings which are both familiar yet unknown.

I dedicate this to my late mother who taught me to paint when I was a child and who encouraged me to keep painting as an adult. Special thanks to Scott, Will and Emma for their support and honest critiques, and to my sisters Lis and Ruscha for their invaluable advise. Thanks and gratitude to Henry Mandell for 'seeing' my work. I am grateful to my artist community, including current and former Painting Center member friends and colleagues, who continue to nourish my journey. And special thanks to Shazzi Thomas.

Front Cover: *Yearning For Spring*, 2021, Oil on panel, 16" x 20"

Back Cover: *River IV*, 2021, 2021, Oil on panel, 16" x 20"

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Photography: Katharine Dufault

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Daily Walk I, 2021, Oil on panel, 12" x 9"

