

KATHARINE DUFAULT - PRESS RELEASE, MARCH 2019

EARLY ONE MORNING

March 26-April 20, 2019 - The Painting Center

The Painting Center is delighted to present *Early One Morning*, an exhibition of new paintings by Katharine Dufault.

Dufault's work reflects her deep love of nature and landscape, nurtured by a childhood spent in the English countryside and, more recently, by her current home at the edge of an estuarial nature reserve in Westchester, New York.

This new series of paintings marks a departure from Dufault's previous work, in which the image filled the entire canvas and beyond, by wrapping around the sides. Her vibrantly colored representations of natural forms and landscapes are now surrounded by monochrome borders with uneven edges.

This pictorial device creates a spatial ambiguity: on one hand giving the impression that one is looking through something, such as an uneven window frame or a jagged hole in a wall at something in the space beyond such as a closeup of leaves, or blossoms or at a wider view of a forest or a sunset sky. On the other hand it's as if the objects or landscapes are resting on, or floating in front of a monochrome surface, like a picture with uneven edges hanging on a wall, or a poster with peeling, torn edges.

This ambiguity is further complicated by the way the crisp edges - of the monochrome borders and of the objects within them - have a flattening effect, as if one were looking at a screen print or at a collage composed of shapes cut from another painting, reminiscent of Matisse's paper cutout collages.

The monochrome borders also serve to link the paintings together in a coherent series, for within these borders there is considerable diversity in color, texture, degrees of abstraction and atmosphere.

*HC I* for example conveys the joys of spring with clear, luminous colors in a playful, rather decorative, semi-abstract image of freshly opened Horse Chestnut leaves against a deep blue sky. Here the mid grey border suggests the wall in a gloomy room, or cave, through which a squareish hole has been hacked to reveal a glimpse of the glorious life and light outside – perhaps this is a vision of a better place to which one might want to escape? Dufault's paintings of Horse Chestnut leaves and blossoms acquire a particular poignance when one learns that they derive from her memories of happy times under the ancient tree in her late mother's garden.

*Forest* by contrast conveys a more mysterious stillness and melancholic atmosphere with its dark mass of trees, suggested by fat, loose, looping brush strokes of inky green paint, and muted orange setting sun, partially obscured in an opaque lavender evening sky and reflected in inky waters below. Here the border is tonally lighter than the scene which it surrounds, suggesting that one is looking through an opening in the wall of a room, illuminated for the evening as the daylight outside rapidly gives way to darkness.

Dufault takes the abstraction further in *Sky I*, in which a glorious riot of translucent purples, reds, and pinks dissolve together around a spreading core of molten gold, the opulence of this sunrise punctuated and counterbalanced by charcoal black silhouettes which stretch and dance and melt in the foreground, evoking the audacious brushstrokes of Japanese calligraphy.

Lis Fields, January 2019

British born Katharine Dufault is a *New York Times*-reviewed artist, curator and visual arts consultant. She has advised non-profit gallery boards, sat on visual arts panels and served as juror for several awards. 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 included in numerous group shows in New York City, Boston, Ohio, Westchester county, Connecticut, the Berkshires and Cambridge, England. Dufault's work is included in many corporate and private collections including Cove Leigh Club, Rye, NY; Dearborn Design Studio, Westchester, NY; Matthew Yee Interiors, NY; Westchester Medical Center; Westchester, NY among others. Dufault lives and works in Westchester, NY.