

Patte Loper

Platform Gallery



INSIDE FRONT COVER

Patte Loper

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2006 to 2016



They Eat Each Other, Thinking They Are Eating Leaves (I) and (II)
2012, oil on canvas, 20 x 24 inches

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Reconstructing the Ideals of Modernism

HPatte Loper illuminates the fissures and failures of the modern agenda. Yet, she does not destroy our ongoing faith in the hopes and ambitions instilled by the decades of veneration for the modernist pioneers. She gently reminds us that human emotions, failures, and ambitions must continue to strive beyond the purity and stripped-down aesthetic of “pure functionality.”

Hoping that some talismanic charm remains, she salvages beauty from the skeletal structures of refined Meisian ideal. These architectural geometries and motifs, which we now cherish as charming relics of a history that fulfilled its promises to only an adventurous few, embraced a radical form of simplicity that denied its meaningful and sustainable relationship to nature. Loper seeks possibility in spaces formed from this fracture and reinserts chaos and chance—and ultimately hope—into the remains of the modern dream.

Her favored motif, decaying architectural forms set within a vast natural space, begs reconsideration of why the tenants of the modernist age simultaneously ushered our culture forward and failed so spectacularly. She strips away veneration for modernism’s purity and posits rebuilding on the debris of our failures. Rejecting any fear of a universal collapse, Loper offers reassuring guideposts to grapple with our era’s quieter, less bombastic sense of existential angst. Her focus on some type of a better outcome through entropic decay points to her faith in human resilience, continually reshaped by necessity.

Nature is Loper’s constant foil for the unfulfilled promises of much earlier decades. In her paintings, the natural world always seems poised to fill in the voids left by man’s hubris. Animals inhabit vacant structures. Nature always appears verdant and nurturing. She depicts a brilliant stillness, a brittle and arrested moment. This stillness is the stage on which we humans will reenact our dramas once more.

Loper’s sensitivity opens us to pathos for this age. Her paintings allow us to feel both disappointment wrought by the failings of modernism and the glimmer of hope for the rebuilding of some of these ideals. She hints that the power to reshape or rebuild lies within our immediate grasp by tapping into our willingness to examine the legacy of the past without flinching and moving forward if we want to avoid repeating the same missteps. Her worlds are always collapsible, but she also constructed them in a way that can be maintained. Such mindfulness may be the most valuable tool for repairing the shattered world.

Rock Huska
Chief Curator and Curator of Contemporary
Northwest Art, Tacoma Art Museum

An Intereview with Patte Loper

Intro paragraph you speak about the pieces you are currently working on in your studio? When the ICC last visited, we were looking at works using The New York Times and also works that were incorporating color; previously your palette was decidedly monochrome.

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PL Color for me is always found (I don't add paint or anything to the surfaces). The material comes first, and formal decisions (how and whether to use the black and white portions) come later. I read the paper every morning, but I never finish it. The problem is that my partner, a radio journalist, has to leave for work before I do, and being a journalist, he always wins the tug of war about who gets to take the paper. So the Times comes back to me after having made the physical journey all the way to the offices of WNYC. The crossword has been finished, and some stains have appeared. The material is already used and has served its primary purpose, so I am free to have my way with it, so to speak. And then I bring it to the studio.

SL In the studio visit, we spoke about your interest in collage as a strategy for resistance, in particular, the ways in which collage sets up sites of resistance by strategically repurposing images sourced from the dominant discourse (adverts, fashion magazines, etc.). Could you elaborate further on how you see collage functioning in this way?

PL I still snicker in delight when I see those big, slick posters in the subway advertising the latest Hollywood movie, and the star (smiling broadly, of course) has a front tooth blacked out in thick marker. The simple act of causing one image to be read in the context of another is a small act of sabotage. All power is contextual, and collage in particular shakes up and disrupts the context in which an image is to be read.

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Let Our Beauty Ease Your Grief

May 11 to June 17, 2006

The artist's first exhibition at Platform included large-scale oil-on-paper paintings carefully executed with imagined and richer detail than the source material, which include stills from the films *North by Northwest* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. The results reveal Patte's attempts at understanding and owning the cultural landscape she grew up within. These paintings are a kind of staged projection of fantasies, desires, anxieties, and aspirations which feature the presence of deer inhabiting spaces cleared of humans.

Also in the exhibition were small graphite drawings which are based on photographs of work-in-progress by sculptors Robert Morris and Alan Saret which illustrated an article from a 1970 *Artforum* magazine. The resulting drawings become a document of the bricolage of irrational messiness and randomness-as-strategy.

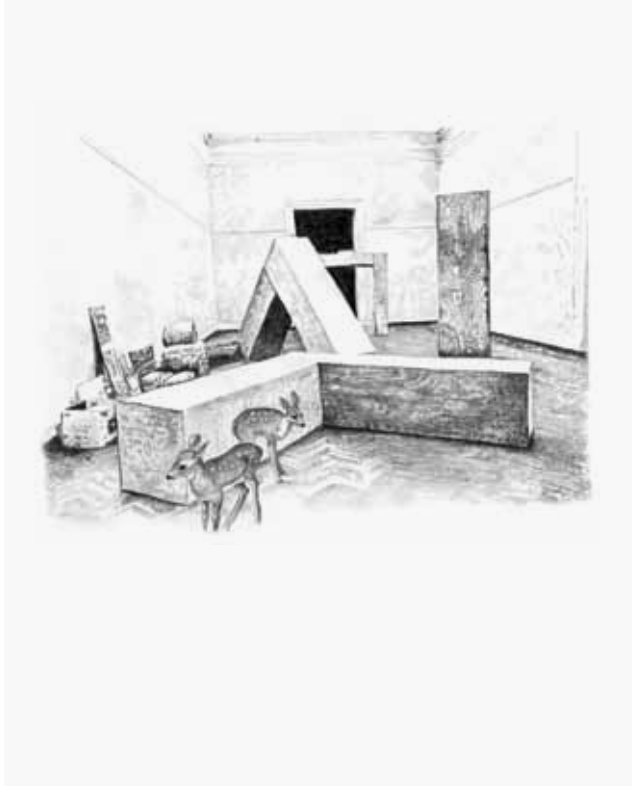
Loper's scenes, whether vibrantly painted or precisely drawn in pencil, have hazy edges like cinematic dream sequences, an effect Loper thinks of, intriguingly, as "speculative," like a sketch, not fixed, but full of potential. Likewise, the action in them is deeply implausible, more imagined than proposed.

—Jen Graves, *The Stranger*





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Let Our Beauty Ease Your Grief

Checklist

- 1 *When A Southerly Wind Blows*, 2006, oil on paper, 62 x 50 inches, private collection
- 2 *Detroit 1969: Steam*, 2006, graphite on paper, 14 x 11 inches
- 3 *Detroit 1969: Concrete Pilings 2*, 2006, graphite on paper, 14 x 11 inches
- 4 *Detroit 1969: Unpainted Objects*, 2006, graphite on paper, 14 x 11 inches, private collection
- 5 *Detroit 1969: Landscape*, 2006, graphite on paper, 14 x 11 inches, private collection
- 6 *Detroit 1969: Interior 2*, 2006, graphite on paper, 14 x 11 inches, private collection
- 7 *Detroit 1969: Concrete Pilings*, 2006, graphite on paper, 14 x 11 inches, private collection
- 8 *Detroit 1969: Interior 1*, 2006, graphite on paper, 14 x 11 inches, private collection
- 9 *Architecture Review 1978 (After The Shoot)*, 2006, oil on paper, 62 x 50 inches, private collection
- 10 *Abandoned Film Set Circa 1977*, 2006, oil on paper, 62 x 50 inches, private collection
- 11 *Goodbye 20th Century*, 2008, hand drawn animation, 1 minute, 18 seconds in length





A Peculiar Brightness in the Sky

June 19 to July 31, 2008

Drawing from John Ruskin's notions of the "Pathetic Fallacy" in which the outward manifestation of the landscape mirrors inner emotional states, Patte Loper's new body of work employs Antarctica—hostile, empty, beautiful—as a fictional site of historical, scientific and emotional speculation. The images are inspired by accounts of early 20th century explorers and their attempts to map uncharted lands with woefully inadequate knowledge and equipment in order to fulfill a sense of manifest destiny—all the while maintaining impeccable manners and civility in the face of hopeless brutality.

Maybe it's global warming and maybe just the romance of barren isolation, but Loper is not alone in her fascination with early 20th-century explorers who headed into the unknown of Antarctica and became trapped in its ice. Her interest is not the lonely heroics of the men who tried to survive in a cold land but the land itself. The small human structures within it are like holes in a garment, easily mended, which means blown away.

—Regina Hackett, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*







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A Peculiar Brightness in the Sky

Checklist

- 12** *Constellation*, 2008, graphite and acrylic on paper, 34 x 30 inches
- 13** *Love Song*, 2008, Hand drawn animation, 54 seconds in length
- 14** *Observation Deck for a Bottomless Pit*, 2008, graphite and acrylic on paper, 60 x 52 inches, 60 x 104 inches overall, diptych
- 15** *Improvised Shelter Series (hut 1)*, 2008, graphite and acrylic on paper, 15 x 11 inches
- 16** *Improvised Shelter Series (hut 2)*, 2008, graphite and acrylic on paper, 15 x 11 inches
- 17** *Improvised Shelter Series (hut 3)*, 2008, graphite and acrylic on paper, 15 x 11 inches
- 18** *Improvised Shelter Series (hut 4)*, 2008, graphite and acrylic on paper, 15 x 11 inches
- 19** *Unrequited Research Facility*, 2008, graphite and acrylic on paper, 22 x 30 inches



Still Point of the Returning World

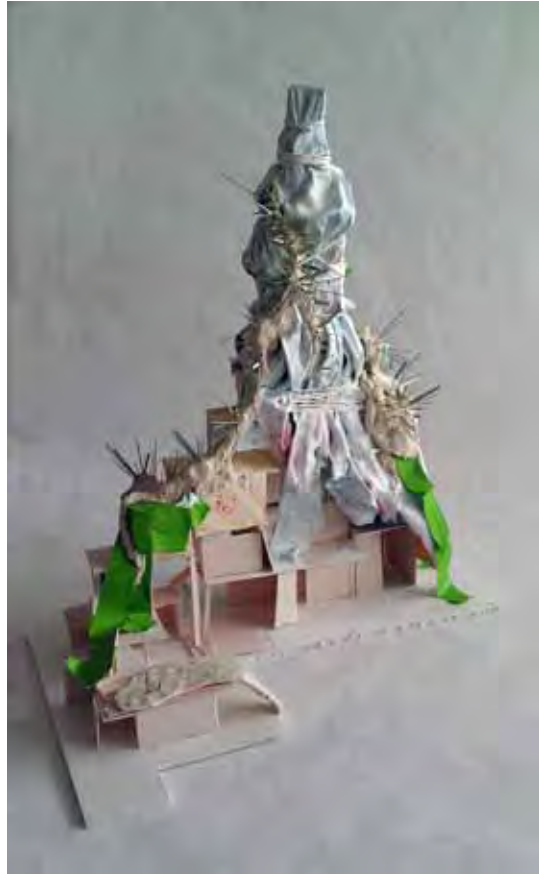
October 6 to November 19, 2011

“I have cobbled together scraps of cardboard, old cloth, sticks, string, and putty to create relatively crude, small sculptures whose design slides between still life, figure, and architecture. I use these objects as subjects for paintings, a process that renders them as dramatic characters and places them into hybrid, two-dimensional environments—environments themselves cobbled together from remnants of iconic images. The sculptures serve as actors in a painterly world that is coming apart and back together again and the work hinges on the possibility of a whole pieced together from the remnants of other things, repurposed from the old, embracing new forms and infusing them with material playfulness and lyrical strangeness. These paintings consider a moment in time when the process of becoming form is caught, stilled at a particular moment, perhaps in transition between states or at a point of realization.

“I am flirting with a deeply intuitive sense of how the works could function and what they mean, and as such, their meaning often escapes language. The forms contain both urgency and totemic energies, with mysterious figures and apparitions rising out of the planned imagery to float along the periphery of understanding, perhaps pulling us deeper into a mysterious communion with the unknown.”

The small row of Patte Loper’s modest, handcrafted sculptures . . . discretely lines a pedestal in the back of . . . [the] Gallery. Untitled (Leipzig) resembles an awkward architectural model of stacked boxes, covered by a bulbous sheet; the nearby funnel created from sticks and cardboard strips stands stagnant in space, like a film prop without a set. Within the surrounding paintings, however, these foreign sculptural objects explode into complex cornerstones of the artist’s fantastical, painted environments. The mound of boxes becomes a radiating acropolis, stranded impossibly between a fairyland and a modernist kitchen in the painting titled Queen Mab; in Remember Me as a Time of Day, the funnel transforms into a radiant, pink cyclone, expunging tree limbs and frolicking foxes into a two-dimensional forest.

—Erin Langner, *New American Paintings* blog



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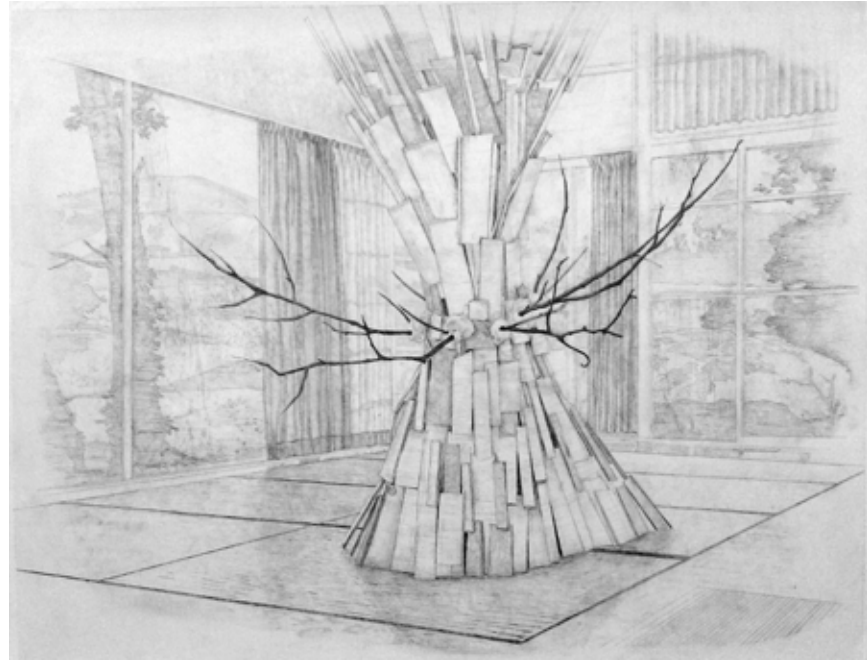
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Still Point of the Returning World

Checklist

- 20 *Remember Me as a Time of Day*, 2011, oil on panel, 20 x 24 inches
- 21 *Untitled (Leipzig)*, 2011, mixed media, variable dimensions
- 22 *Queen Mab*, 2011, oil on panel, 30 x 40 inches
- 23 *Funneling Light from Other Universes into Our Mundane World*, 2011, oil on paper, 18 x 22 inches
- 24 *Untitled (2)*, 2011, mixed media, variable dimensions
- 25 *No Matter How Many Skies Have Fallen*, 2011, oil on panel, 30 x 40 inches
- 26 *Tender Horns*, 2011, graphite on acrylic on paper, 18 x 22 inches, private collection
- 27 *Untitled (1)*, 2011, mixed media, variable dimensions



How to Stay Alive in the Woods

June 20 to July 27, 2013

“These paintings are made by directly observing models (created from piecing together scraps of found material), allowing an exploration of their construction. The models are depicted as if they were scaled up to building size and located in specific sites. As they are painted, the sites generate memories of the location, which then mingle with the presence of the model, adding a haptic quality. The fact that some of the models’ building material is collected at the site also gains importance as the work takes on the place’s colors, textures, and other characteristics.

“These figures of the sculptures are painted frontally, as if they are being presented for examination. The historicity of painting as a medium is used to refer to classical portraiture or watercolor botanical studies done by naturalists before the use of photography. Use of so much sensory experience, as well as the strangeness of the objects and the familiarity of the woods, i that the works take on a psychological or narrative quality that reflects upon the connection between the human and the natural world.”

It’s happening again, now, with the obscure perception of a kind of “primitive future” that begins to materialize in visual, musical, literary. The creative response to the crisis is well to use in post-apocalyptic world of the rubble key we knew: the ruins of the previous world, in fact, it traces how to tell a new beginning—and the subtle but radical alteration of the entire value system that guides the choices of individuals. This, and probably much more, is contained in the “stick things” and fragile accumulations that gradually invade the TV series, museums, books and sounds.

—Christian Caliandro, *minima & moralia* blog



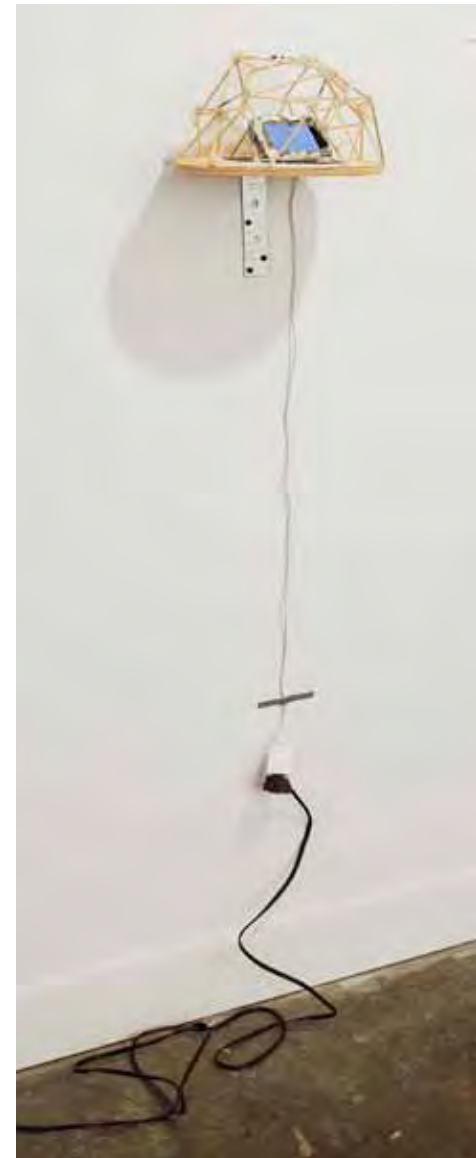
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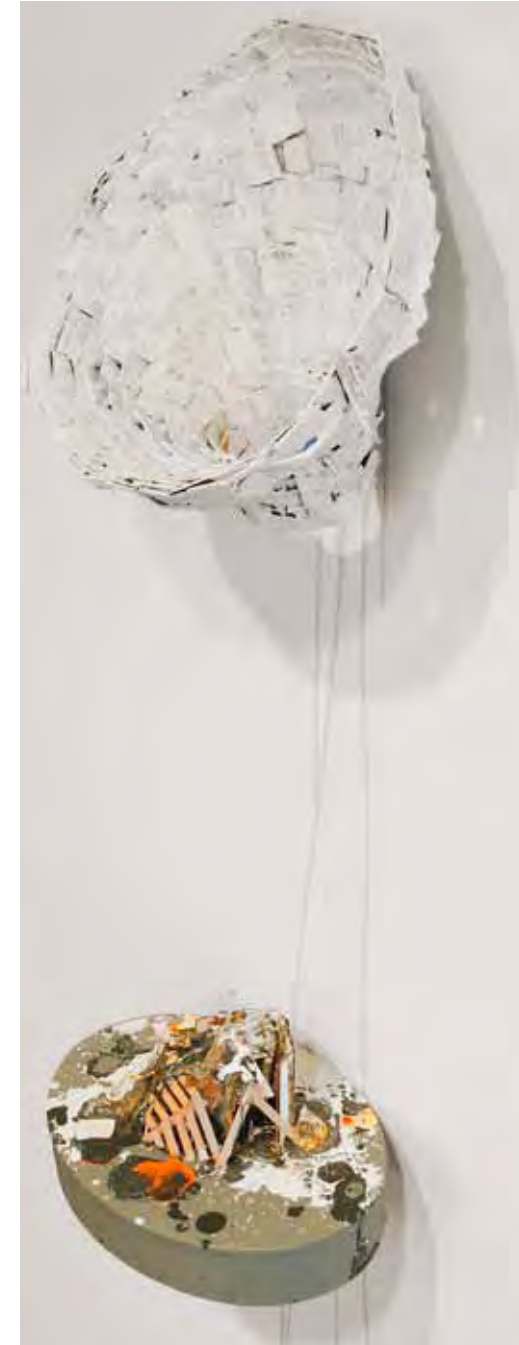
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How to Stay Alive in the Woods

Checklist

- 28** Installation view with *Worktable (A Plea for Better Leaders in the Form of Automatic Sculpture)*, 2013, cardboard, paint, sticks, putty, xerox paper, ipod nanos, found material, 31 x 53 x 48 inches
- 29** Installation view detail
- 30** *I Want to Believe In Everything You Believe*, 2012, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 inches
- 31** *Welcome, Ghosts*, 2013, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 inches
- 32** *Untitled (two whales sitting in a bar)*, 2013, wood, duct tape, paint, dedicated iPod
- 33** *Untitled (two whales sitting in a bar)*, detail
- 34** *But My Heart is Wild and My Bones Are Steel*, 2013, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 inches
- 35** *Six Days at the Bottom of the Ocean*, 2012, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 inches
- 36** *Untitled (sad)*, 2013, cardboard, paint, found material, dimensions variable
- 37** *Untitled (sad)*, detail
- 38** *It is Difficult to Teach Bones*, 2013, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 inches
- 39** Installation view detail

About the Artist

Patte Loper is a painter who experiments with sculpture and video, she was born in Colorado and grew up in Tallahassee, Florida, a subtropical college town where she first developed an appreciation for the ways nature and culture can overlap. She currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY and Boston, MA where she is on the faculty of the School of the Museum of fine Arts, Boston.

She has shown her work in numerous solo and group exhibitions internationally, including the Drawing Center New York, The Licini Museum Ascoli Piceno Italy, LMCC's Art Center on Governor's Island, New York, the Palaentological Museum, Cortina, Italy, The Blue Star Contemporary Art Museum San Antonio, Texas, the Tacoma Art Museum, the Westbeth Gallery New York, the ISE Foundation New York, and the Center on Contemporary Art Seattle.

Her work has been reviewed in the Italian edition of *Flash Art*, *Artnet*, *Time Out*, *Chicago*, and the *Boston Globe*, and is in the collections of the Rene di Rosa Foundation, the Microsoft Corporation, and the Hirshhorn Museum. She participated in residency fellowships at the Millay Colony, Constance Saltonstall Foundation for the Arts, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and Lower Manhattan Cultural Center's Swing Space, and participated in the Drawing Center's Open Sessions program and is a member artist of the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts Studio Program.



INSIDE BACK COVER

BACK COVER

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