

Time Out

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Merry Munk



It's hard to be an expressionist painter, especially an abstract one, in 2006. After AbEx was discredited in the 1960s as a vehicle for conveying heroic emotions, it limped along zombielike, a style without much substance. But recently, a new group of painters—most of them women, including Amy Sillman, Charline von Heyl and Jacqueline Humphries—have been breathing new life into the old form. In her first NYC solo show in nine years, Eva Lundsager rises in their ranks.

Passages of these terrific canvases evoke skies, trees, mountains and bodies of water, but the compositions of riotous color and animated brushwork never coalesce into landscapes. Drips flow up, down and across, conjuring stalks, roots and rain. Dotlike dabs suggest flowers, fruit and leaves, as well as abstract patterns. Twombly-esque scribbles can hint at clouds, foliage, even a bowl of flowers in the painting *Wherever*, as well as remaining just an undefined mass of marks.

Lundsager manages to create atmosphere while holding representation at arms length. The frothy *Daytime Ghost* feels like a light-filled afternoon in early summer. In its impression of a sunrise above a softly undulating garden, *Hermit Style* nods in the direction of Hockney's California views. *Merry Munk* invokes Munch in its suggestion of a flowering field, leggy trees, distant blue mountains and a cloudy but glowing red sky. But without a specific sense of place, we linger in the open-ended "wherever" of the exhibition's title.

Lundsager's paintings sing beautifully of landscape without ever describing one. — *Joseph R. Wolin*