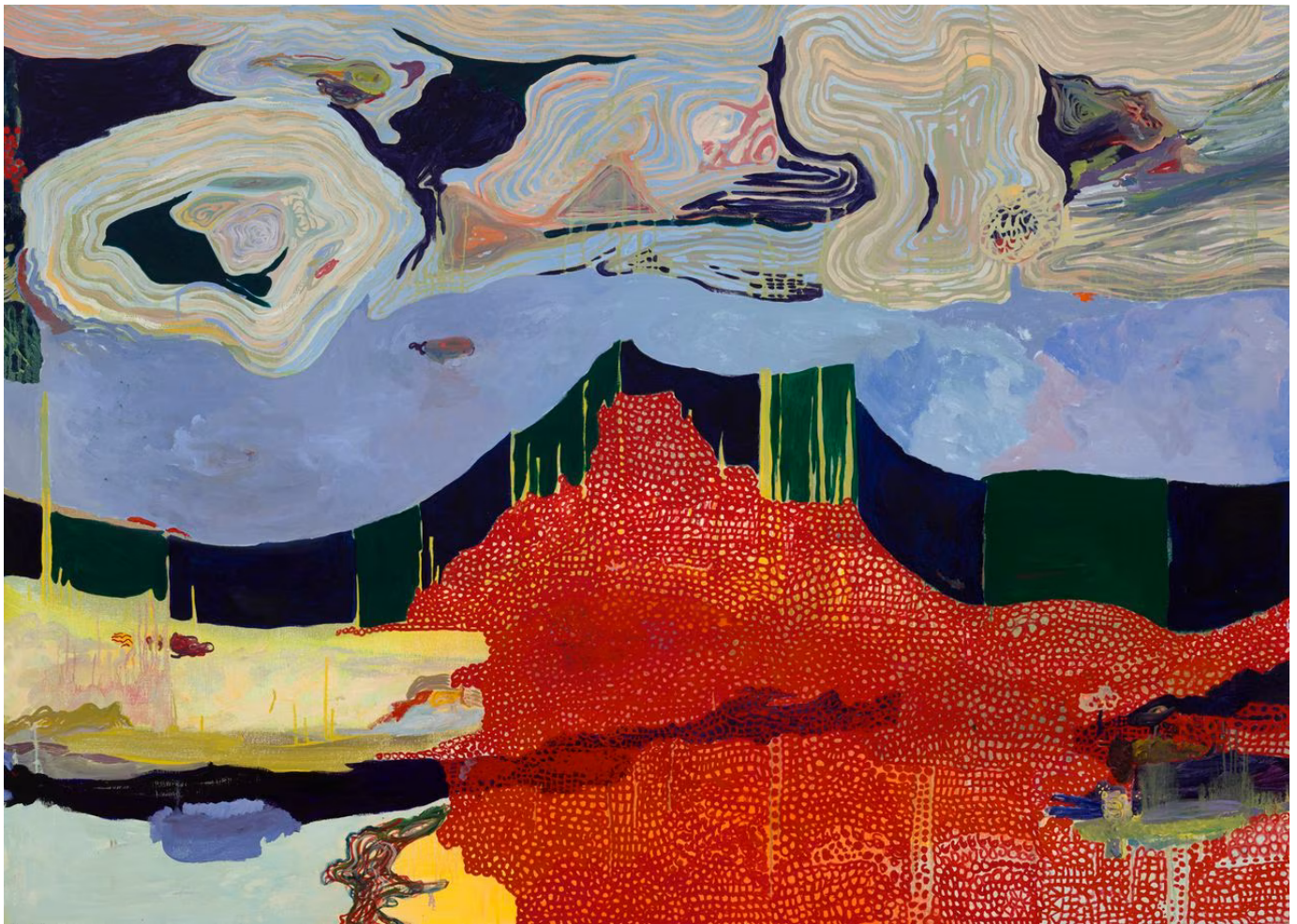


GALLERIES

Paintings that are all about touch

Eva Lundsager's work at Praise Shadows Art Gallery feels alive

By **Cate McQuaid** Globe Correspondent, Updated May 31, 2023, 11:13 a.m.



Eva Lundsager, "First Attempt." JULIA FEATHERINGILL

Eva Lundsager's paintings in "Ovation" at Praise Shadows Art Gallery seem built from sensation. The Boston-based artist is process-focused; like painters [Joanne Greenbaum](#) and [Amy Sillman](#), she follows the directions the painting takes her in. Her sometimes gooey, sometimes ephemeral materiality, strident color, and biomorphic forms echo the ceramic sculptures of [Arlene Shechet](#) and [Kathy Butterly](#) because, as in ceramics, there's something here that's all about touch.

But ceramics can't really convey space, and Lundsager's suggestions of horizon lines orient us in a landscape, as in the glacial "We are quiet," with deep blues and blushing whites rent by a streak of red. But then you see droplets of paint moving upward, defying gravity, and the painter's world turns upside down.

"First Attempt" resembles a mountain landscape: A dark, rugged undulation of a horizon crosses the middle beneath a powder-blue sky topped with clouds written in swirling concentric rings, like fingerprints. On second look, those clouds might be eyes. Just inside the outline of the mountains, dense red netting collapses in on itself, looking like monstrous, plump lips. Landscape morphs into portrait. And then into something else — choose your confection.

The changeability of these works feels alive. It's an argument for how fluid we may feel inside as we try to adapt to societal strictures. Consequently, Lundsager's paintings express aura and emotion more than anything concrete. The titles are innocuous phrases she found in a book about World War II among the belongings of her late father, C. Bent Lundsager, who was active in the Danish Resistance during that conflict. They are as open-ended as the paintings.

"Were now like" nearly shimmers, with broad, golden brushstrokes describing a

soft hill and a burnished sky. That background is lustrous, all satin sheets and afterglow, until Lundsager abruptly interrupts it with blots of flat color, like lily pads breaking the shine on a reflective pond. Painterly drips spike upward, and a splotchy, streaky house or head form sprouts from the edge of the hill. What started as dreamy turns psychedelic.

In the dance between painter and paint, this artist both leads and follows. The two-step of technical mastery and surrender to material is tricky — but it's Lundsager's ability to let go that ultimately enables viewers to be transported, as well.

EVA LUNDSAGER: OVATION

At Praise Shadows Art Gallery, 313A Harvard St., Brookline, through June 11.

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