



Dana Berardinis:
True Remains

Davi Nelson:
Vistas



A Natural Response
Two Exhibitions in a Year-long Series
Inspired by a Sense of Place



Paris Gibson Square
MUSEUM OF ART

Dana Berardinis:
True Remains
On View in the Thayer Gallery

Sponsored by

UGRIN, ALEXANDER, ZADICK AND HIGGINS, PC

Davi Nelson: Vistas
On View in the Rothschiller Gallery

Sponsored by



February 18 - May 15, 2010
Artists' Reception 5:30 - 7:30 pm February 18th
ArtShare Presentations by the Artists at 6:00 & 6:30pm

Foreward & Acknowledgements

Bob Durden, Curator of Art

For those who have the opportunity and good fortune to travel, near or far, the experience is often filled with wonder. Smells, sights and sounds ignite our senses amongst the unfamiliar paths that are taken, often stretching our expectations and imaginations. Travelers may find peculiarities in different attitudes and customs and find themselves searching for a context in which to calculate meaning.

Geographic and environmental conditions in any given place impact the manner in which culture is formed. For a multitude of artists in the 20th and 21st centuries, a “sense of place” became and remains undeniable and forms a core for much of the visual work done throughout the world. This is most certainly true for artists living and working in Montana—a state that encompasses a diverse ecosystem impacted by an arid climate. In this place, the northern light, mostly uninterrupted by humidity, has a sharpness and clarity that finds its way into pictorial works. The distance visible across the plains, which abruptly intersects with the Rockies, often inspires artists to represent a grand scale. And, sparsely populated urban pockets create opportunities for artists in the state to nourish cultural appetites yearning to be fed.

The Square continues its regular exhibition programming this year with the first of two in a series of eight exhibitions that portray different attitudes about a sense of place. Both exhibiting artists, Dana Berardinis and Davi Nelson, share an intense connection to the land that will be evident upon one’s viewing. Their knowledge of place is impacted, like many visual artists working in the state, by a first-hand and up close view of the subject—experienced outside of an urban center. Though their applications of paint differ by significant degrees, these artists share an expressive quality that reflects their love and empathy for their natural surroundings and the implicit solitary lifestyles that are required to live there in tune with often harsh environments.

We at The Square thank these exhibiting artists for participating in our exhibition program and the multitude of people who made these exhibitions possible: the partners and associates of Ugrin, Alexander, Zadick and Higgins P.C. for their sponsorship of *Dana Berardinis: True Remains*; and Sarah Walsh, Latigo & Lace and Pam Hansen Alfred and her colleagues at State Farm Insurance for their sponsorship of *Davi Nelson: Vistas*. We also thank the following for their continued support of all of our exhibitions and programs: museum members and supporters, the National Endowment for the Arts, Montana Arts Council & the Citizens of Cascade County.



Skeleton of Burned Cottonwood Roots Renewal, 2009, oil, moss, lichen and charcoal on wood, 71 x 60"

Dana Berardinis:

True Remains

“While growing up in a rural mid-western town, I preferred to spend my time in the fields and woods. Captured by the tones and textures of what I saw there, I would draw the trees and cornfields of my home. I would bring back collections of bark, corn husk and bones to reference and apply to my creations.

In 2004, I received a degree in fine art from the Cleveland Institute of Art. Upon graduating, I was eager to continue my explorations. My journey lead me westward to a place where I could paint freely without interruptions. Here in Montana, I find again, paths to the ever present tones and textures of the natural palette. I memorize what I see and make drawings as I explore the vast wilderness.

Powerful forces and cycles of nature have helped to shape and recreate the vast features of the land. Although nature’s forces can be devastating, time reveals the Earth’s ability to heal and transform itself, leaving behind a new surrounding that lives on.

The fires of Montana have opened up passages to what once was and what will be again—the remains of burned trees, scattered and hidden among the forest, provide signs of the past. Hill sides of blackened trees nurture and guard thousands of younger trees. The forest is recreating itself into a much healthier one. Old trees that have lived long lives finally get to rest in peace. They replenish the land with new seeds and fertilize the soil beneath them.

Fire has a very beautiful and intriguing life of its own. The intense flames seem to be a timeless gesture rolling across the horizon. When ash and smoke clear, new vistas welcome a breath of fresh air and signify new beginnings.

I find spontaneity and freedom in the power of nature, which inspires me in the creation of my work. I experience painting the way I do the landscape. It holds the same quietness, the same search. Through the layering of paint and materials, I begin to find continuity with what I’ve discovered in nature. I scrape and burn into the surface. The materials I use (moss, charcoal, pine needles, duff and other organic materials) signify the surroundings from where they have been taken, allowing me to connect more directly with nature. I begin a new journey through each painting. As I paint, memories rush through me. Most of the time, I am searching for answers I can only come so close to understanding. I find something indescribable in nature that is never made completely clear in the form of language, which creates my need to paint.

Like the seasons, time transforms the forest and leaves only remnants of what once was, and truth remains.”—Dana Berardinis



Wildfires, 2009, oil on canvas, 47½ x 63½"



Burned Forest, 2005, oil, ashes and charcoal on canvas, 35½ x 55¾"



Spirit Renewed, 2009, oil on wood, 46 x 60"



Exhibition Checklist

- Fallen Tree 1**, 2005, oil, wax and pastels on canvas, 10 x 8"
Fallen Tree 2, 2005, oil, wax and pastels on canvas, 8 x 10"
Burned Cottonwood Roots, 2005, oil on wood, 7 x 11"
Reaching Beyond, 2005, oil and bark on canvas, 10 x 8"
Swampland of Burned Forest, 2005, oil, twigs and moss on canvas, 11 x 14"
Still Standing, 2005, oil and bark on canvas, 12 x 16"
Burned Forest, 2005, oil, ashes and charcoal on canvas, 35½ x 55¾"
Mammoth Creek, 2006, oil on canvas, 41 x 42½" (pictured at left)
Augusta, 2007, oil on canvas, 45½ x 47¾"
Bowman Re-growth, 2008, oil, moss, lichen, pine needles and charcoal on canvas, 36 x 63½"
Skeleton of Burned Cottonwood Roots, 2008, oil, tar, charcoal and weeds on wood, 71 x 60"
Skeleton of Burned Cottonwood Roots Renewal, 2009, oil, moss, lichen and charcoal on wood, 71 x 60"
Trees Stand like Skeletons, 2009, oil and duff on wood, 46 x 60"
Woodland Ghosts, 2009, oil on wood, 46 x 60"
Spirit Renewed, 2009, oil on wood, 46 x 60"
Inflamed Lands, 2009, oil on canvas, 46½ x 65¾"
Luminous Smoke Clouds, 2009, oil on canvas, 60 x 71¾"
Wildfires, 2009, oil on canvas, 47½ x 63½"



Inflamed Lands, 2009, oil on canvas, 46½ x 65¾"

Davi Nelson:

Vistas

“My work is a reflection of the landscape I live in. It is not a portrait of a specific place, but rather an attempt to evoke a sense of place and a way of life in a rural environment.”—Davi Nelson

Davi Nelson and her husband, Carroll, live on a ranch southwest of Ryegate, Montana, where they raise commercial cattle. The isolation of the location and its profound sense of space are the focus of her paintings.

Her work has been exhibited internationally in such diverse venues as Ireland, *The American West, a 21st Century Retrospective*; and China, *Out West, The Great American Landscape*. Past museum exhibitions include *The Evocative Landscape* at the Holter Museum, Helena, Montana; *Contemporary Montana Artists* at the Museum of the Rockies, Bozeman, Montana; *Masters in Miniature* at the C. M. Russell Museum, Great Falls, Montana; and *Postcards of the Wild West* at the Nicolaysen Museum, Casper, Wyoming. Her work may also be seen July 1 to October 1, 2010 in *Montana Landscape: The Eye of the Beholder* at the Holter Museum in Helena, Montana.

Davi Nelson's work is found in numerous private and corporate collections. She is represented by the Dana Gallery, Missoula, Montana, the Holter Museum, Helena, Montana, and Latigo and Lace in Augusta, Montana.



Winter Moon, 2008, oil on canvas, 48 x 40"



Deep Snow II, 2009, oil on paper, 20 x 30"



Winter Collection, Golden Valley County (diptych), 2009, oil on paper, 26 x 40"



Cross Country III, 2009, oil on paper, 30 x 22"



Exhibition Checklist

Winter Moon, 2008, oil on canvas, 48 x 40"

Winter Solstice II, 2009, oil on canvas, 25 x 30"

Evening Canopy, 2009, oil on paper, 21 x 25"

Distant Snow, 2009, oil on paper, 19 x 28" (pictured at left)

Sweet Grass County, September, 2009, oil on paper, 22 x 30"

Winter Collection, Golden Valley County (diptych), 2009, oil on paper, 26 x 40"

Deep Snow II, 2009, oil on paper, 20 x 30"

Blue Bluffs, 2009, oil on paper, 22 x 27"

High Plains Dialogue, 2009, oil on paper, 23 x 30"

Cross Country III, 2009, oil on paper, 30 x 22"

Edge of the Crazyes II, 2009, oil on paper, 20 x 26"

Spring, 2009, oil on paper, 22 x 28"

Wet Banks, 2010, oil on canvas, 36 x 40"



Blue Bluffs, 2009, oil on paper, 22 x 27"



**The
Square**

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