

Adam Straus Interview Nohra Haime Gallery

By JOYCE KOROTKIN

Your signature motif, the use of lead and steel frames, was missing in your last show; but now it is back again.

Most of the pictures in this show are illusions of deep space. I felt that they needed a window; a focus. The lead and steel worked great. Some of them are paintings worked directly on the lead, with areas around the edges left unpainted that will act like frames.

One of the things that I find most interesting about your work is that you manage to paint traditional subjects, like seascapes, and even water lilies, and yet the work feels edgy. You take it into another realm and make it thoroughly contemporary. And you get away with it.

Oh, yeah. People just love to roll their eyes about Impressionism. They forget that Monet completely busted loose the whole idea of representational space, even earlier than Cezanne. And it's so much about beauty; about color and light and the sublime in nature. I wanted to try and figure out what he did. So I went to Paris to look. I did all this reading and studying and looking, and tried to do it. But I didn't even come close.

In a certain way, Monet has this reputation as being just decorative and passe, and Duchamp is like God. Duchamp is like an academy now, and everyone follows him. This whole conceptual thing killed off a lot of really good artists. If someone did that with Monet, like Bidlo emulated Duchamp, he'd be considered just decorative. But Monet, in his own time, was equally valid. You know, Monet's "Waterlilies" were actually painted after Duchamp's "Urinal" of 1914. They were around in the 1920's. Monet and Duchamp just had opposing attitudes about how to look at the world. God, you reproduce the "Bicycle Wheel" today and you're hip. ♡

Ed. Note: Adam Straus has a solo exhibition at the Nora Haime Gallery this month (see Midtown listings)



Adam Straus *Wanderers: leaving No Stone Unturned*, 2000. Oil on canvas framed in steel . 31x43x2 inches. Courtesy: Nohra Haime Gallery, New York