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Adam Straus

NOHRA HAIME

Adam Straus has always been in love with nature, as devoted to its beauty and ability to inspire as were his heroes Frederic Church, John Kensett, and John Gamble. But that love was also accompanied by a concern for nature's vulnerability. In his older paintings, a McDonald's sign looms over an otherwise pristine desert and an oil spill pollutes a transparent green-blue sea. The paintings evoke feelings of both pleasure and impending doom. Hopper's characters would be at home in Straus's lonesome landscapes, though his environments are far more ominous than Hopper's.

In these 12 brilliant new landscapes, all handsomely framed by Straus in steel or lead, he shows his same



Adam Straus, *An Early Spring*, 2002, oil on canvas encased in lead, 59" x 74" x 2".
Nohra Haime.

passion for nature. The major difference here was that his skill had increased markedly, as was evident in his deft rendering of the craggy cliffs in *A Small Island Paradise* and the delicate seascape *Long Island Moonrise*. Working mostly in shades of blue and gray, he infuses his subjects with grandeur. He calls attention to man's destructiveness in the majestic *King of the Mountain*, where a tiny figure on top of a lonely mountain pointlessly shoots a rifle, and again in *An Early Spring*, which, with dripping snow, refers to

the horrendous effects of global warming.

But there were more works in this exhibition that simply glorified nature, particularly the iridescent *Montauk Morning: Dune in Fog*, as misty and resonant as a Kensett. Straus seems to be moving into a new stage in his career. Studying the masters and experimenting with different kinds of paint have paid off.

—Valerie Gladstone