

NOHRA HAIME GALLERY 500 W 21st STREET

ADAM STRAUS

Still Looking for the Promised Land

April 6 – May 8, 2021

Still Looking for the Promised Land, an exhibition of recent landscape paintings by Adam Straus, will be on view at Nohra Haime Gallery from April 6 – May 8, 2021. Subtly calling attention to issues in the news during the 45th presidency, the paintings contrast current events from 2016-2020 with an optimistic view of nature's resilience. The exhibition can also be viewed online beginning on April 6th.



Still Looking for the Promised Land, 2018. Oil and graphite on newspaper and shopping lists adhered to jute, adhered to wood, framed in lead, 41 x 63 x 2 in.

A consummate observer of both nature and politics, Straus juxtaposes classic romantic landscapes of National Parks or images inspired by 19th-century artists such as Martin Johnson Heade and John Kensett with layers of recent newspaper coverage of politics, racism, immigration, human rights and other issues.

“After the 2016 election I had a feeling of impending doom,” Straus said. “I began to witness the news go from bad to worse. This was the initial impetus in covering whatever surface I was working on with the newspaper

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to contrast the absurdity and tragedies of humanity with depictions of the magnificence of nature.”

Although much of the news is painted over by Straus, headlines and images can still be seen within his landscapes of mountains, oceans, and gardens. At times he will scratch additional headlines and phrases from the news over the paintings in graphite, some readable and some not, but often becoming a cacophony of jumbled information. This underlining layer of information grew to include his son’s drawings as well as day-to-day mundane shopping lists, and even rejection letters from the Guggenheim fellowship.

Some of the landscapes are further altered by digitally-inspired glitches and translucent shrouds created by adhering rice paper over parts of the image, referring to man’s uneasy relationship with nature. Other paintings are meant to provide escape from the daily bombardment of news, while several become a visual version of the news that is most important to him as an artist.

“It is my continued belief in the resilience of nature, that no matter what we do, it will survive even if we don’t, and that something will grow out of the cracks of whatever we leave,” Straus notes. “But, it is also my hope that we get our act together and start saving what we can’t survive without. While I think of these paintings as optimistic, I hope that they also suggest that the Earth is being drastically affected by our presence, and we need to improve our relationship to nature.”

Work by Adam Straus is in numerous museum collections including the Parrish Art Museum, Bridgehampton, NY; List Visual Center, M.I.T., Cambridge, MA; Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, OH; The Art Museum at F.I.U., Miami, FL; Mead Art Museum, Amherst, MA; Tufts University Art Gallery, Somerville, MA; and the William College Museum of Art, Williamstown, MA, among others. A monograph on the work of Adam Straus was published by Gli Ori, Italy, in 2016. The book includes text by Adam Straus, edited with an essay by filmmaker and art critic Amei Wallach. Straus writes about childhood experiences, unusual moments with collectors and how a move to the North Fork of Long Island from Brooklyn in 2003 inspired many of his works. Born in Miami in 1956, Straus lives and works in Riverhead, NY.

Dates: April 6 – May 8, 2021

For more information: Leslie Garrett at 212-888-3550 or gallery@nohraimegallery.com