



# ELLIOTT GREEN

# ELLIOTT GREEN

MILES  
McENERY  
GALLERY

511 West 22nd Street  
New York NY 10011

515 West 22nd Street  
New York NY 10011

525 West 22nd Street  
New York NY 10011

520 West 21st Street  
New York NY 10011





# FIRE AND ICE

By Phoebe Hoban

*Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon doesn't know the falconer  
Things fall apart, the center cannot hold  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.*

— W.B. Yeats, “The Second Coming”

*For beauty's nothing but the beginning of terror we're still just able to bear, and why we adore it  
so is because it serenely disdains to destroy us.*

— Rainer Maria Rilke, “The First Duino Elegy”

Does the world end in fire or ice? Whimper or bang? How do we comprehend its beginning or forecast its end? These are the questions that Elliott Green’s visceral vistas elicit, their turbulent spectrum roiling with vibrant visual cues; cosmic clues about the nature of nature, and by extension, of human nature itself.

Green’s landscapes, unlike, say, Paul Cézanne’s iconic views of Mont Sainte-Victoire, are not an effort to create something “solid and durable,” as Cézanne himself once declared, but instead emanate sheer transience; a disorienting sense of dangling from the precipice of the abyss, collectively cognizant of the explosive epic of the big bang past, while reeling on the cusp of the perilous future.





Paul Cézanne, Mont Sainte-Victoire, Oil on canvas, 38 3/4 x 36 3/16 inches (73 x 91.9 cm).  
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA.

Like Cézanne, Green uses a motif of reduced geometric forms to represent nature. But Green’s painting process veers in a radically different direction than Cézanne’s deliberately standardized, repetitive brushstrokes, often applied in a single layer. If Cézanne was pre-Cubist, Green is post-fractal. And while Cézanne painted his beloved mountain en plein air repeatedly, Green, who has never painted outdoors, revels in his aspiration to “never do anything twice.”

That is to a great extent the result of the inspired convergence of the artist’s subject matter with his improvised—and improvisational—painting technique. Green uses an inventive array of home-made tools to make his mark. And the key ingredient to the fluid malleability of his canvases is, as he puts it, his “long love affair with graphite.”

It’s not surprising that Green, an autodidact, made his first foray into art with ceramics, where he learned to handle clay, utilizing the pure power of manual gestures to manipulate the material into new forms. Green has devised a painting method by which his every arm and hand gesture is recorded by the liquid graphite he mixes before beginning each canvas.

“When I’m starting out and I have no idea what I am going to do, it doesn’t really matter. I can sort of swing my arm around,” the artist demonstrates, “and I can make this beautiful line, and then I can move it right out of the way,” he says, wiping the line out. “The graphite has this mercurial morphing property, and it simultaneously documents every gesture really clearly. I like the way the graphite captures the gestural energy of the line I want to animate.”

It is this gestural energy that palpably animates Green’s canvases, revealing, as it were, not only nature’s nervous system—the earth’s volatile evolving geology and cataclysmic climate—but expressing its very essence, its animus or spirit. Green’s landscapes embody the concept of the Hebrew word, “Ruah,” or wind, breath and spirit.

Green lives in Athens, a town just across the river from Hudson, N.Y., and is thus by definition a Hudson River painter. But his landscapes, which contain no sign of civilized human presence, are, if anything, anti-pastoral. His studio is a large nearly windowless former garage. The vivid panoramas he creates on canvas erupt directly from Green’s psyche and subconscious; a collision of his internal and external worlds, or as I wrote in a 2017 review, “a painted barometer of a roiling subconscious encountering disorienting change....landscape as free association; topology rendered through id.”

This is landscape as metaphor. Green moved to the Hudson Valley in 2005. But in 2012, while visiting ruins during a fellowship at the American Academy in Rome, the artist had an epiphany. “I saw the possibility of landscape as a format for what I was doing with abstraction,” Green says.

“I thought it would give me a narrative, and I could use space to show time, and I could include more elements in a picture and express more. That was a revelation—the potential of landscape to further what I was trying to do in abstraction.”

Green’s dynamically abstracted landscapes are indeed revelatory. To say that he has reinvented the genre is not an exaggeration. Most contemporary efforts at mediating figuration and abstraction result in something betwixt and between. Green, who transitioned from figuration to abstraction in gradual phases—from cartoony figures to floating biomorphic shapes to his current oeuvre—has developed a striking, *sui generis* style.

While fundamentally expressive, Green’s aesthetic closely adheres to abstract expressionism’s basic roots, which, heavily influenced by the then innovative theories of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, encouraged artists to express their individual responses to the *Zeitgeist*. As Arshile Gorky wrote at the time, “The stuff of thought is the seed of the artist. Dreams form the bristles of the artist’s brush. And as the eye functions as the brain’s entry, I communicate my most private perceptions through my art, my view of the world.”

Green’s dreams—and his view of the world—seem to push not only the bristles of his brush, but the myriad other methods with which he layers color onto canvas, from dragging a sponge dipped in graphite-infused paint to create a tubular, grey, worm-like entity with an iterative rippled skin, to bright, opaque tectonic slabs of paint, to gauzily radiant washes, numinous intervals which appear between curtains of sky. Each painting is a new experiment. “It’s a constant exploration, which is what keeps it refreshing,” the artist says. “I am never executing preconceived ideas.”

Green grew up in a large, unconventional, talented family, somewhat reminiscent of Wes Anderson’s characters in “The Royal Tenenbaums,” or J.D. Salinger’s storied *The Glass Family*. His father, by profession a dentist, used his considerable dexterity to master ceramics and to

skillfully repair household items, and the family’s basement was a treasure trove of assorted tools. His mother owned a bead store.

Green attended Cranbrook Kingswood School, known for its art curriculum. There he excelled at ceramics. A high school friend, Mike Rubiner, recalls Green’s parents being devoted to allowing their children to explore their artistic aspirations, and driving them to music, dancing lessons, etcetera in an old limo. Rubiner also recalls Green making breathtakingly beautiful pottery at Cranbrook, which he often impulsively shattered.

The artist’s skill and inventiveness with tools is both genetic and conditioned: he comes from a family adept at working with their hands. Tools and how to use them were literally handed down from generation to generation. His maternal grandfather, like his father, was a dentist; his paternal great uncle was a house painter.

Green’s studio mirrors his childhood experience. Every nook and cranny, it seems, is stuffed with tools, most of his own making. There are brushes bundled together to create a variegated meta-brush; squeegees with their rubber neatly serrated sequentially by a jig saw, so that when applying paint, the successively-sized teeth create a sense of depth; a plethora of scraping and palette knives; even a massage vibrator, its head swaddled in a towel, that, by causing his hand to quiver, creates a wavering line.

Green employs this cornucopia of implements to layer his canvases; the accretion of marks may at first appear random, but the artist has an innate sense of composition, deftly juggling the unexpected juxtaposition of shapes and colors into a cohesive balance that both emulates and reconfigures nature, creating images that range from contemplative and serene to disturbing, even violent; from the stuff of dreams to the stuff of nightmares.

As the artist himself has written, “My subject matter has always been generated from inside of me, and I’ve used paint as a guide to bring up to consciousness deeper truths and connections. But those truths, as in a dream, are often packaged in metaphors with multiple possible meanings, complex and hard to pin down, and ultimately difficult for the dreamer to decode.”

Green’s pictorial vocabulary of organic shapes, which the artist classifies as “hospitable or inhospitable,” distills the natural world into potent signifiers, telegraphing humanity’s primal survival strategy. There are jagged mountain peaks (inhospitable) and calm azure lagoons, (hospitable), lava-like plumes and verdant valleys. Combining and configuring a kaleidoscopic range of colors, strokes and textures, Green presents a powerful view of his (and our) exterior/interior world.

Green often depicts different and sometimes clashing weather zones within a single piece. The lyrical *Sing in the Sky*, (2024), which focuses on a frothy band of clouds dissecting the canvas, is a notable exception. The shapes and hues are seductively soft, and the only hints of danger lie in the slashing blue strokes of sky and the unexpected arid ridges that interrupt what could be gently rolling hills or a denser lower level of clouds. As in all of Green’s work, there is an inherent sense of motion.

The smaller-scaled *Fabular Landscape* (2023), in contrast, is mind-bogglingly complex, displaying the artist’s formidable use of varied mark making, including a delicately articulated feathered effect, done with a pinking-shears-trimmed sponge. In it, the sea, sky, and land seem to seamlessly merge, with mountains melting into oceans and vegetation verging on meadows and rivulets. Wisps of sky punctuate a terrain that is simultaneously turbulent and fecund.

In *Wind Blown Voyagers* (2023), the sea and sky, rendered in turquoise-celadon tones, part, providing a spatial/temporal portal through which distant peaks can be glimpsed. *Take it Home*

(2023), features a fugue-like cloud formation. This not-quite-sheltering sky dominates the mountain ridge, ribboned with green life.

Clearly inhospitable, the territory mapped in *Maze of Rain* (2023), with its craggy peaks—poisoned sea or drought-plagued desert—and its ruffled curtains unfurling into torrential rain, evokes not only the extreme weather caused by climate change, but portrays the current geo-political state of the world itself.

The peaceful view offered by *Resting Mountains* (2023), provides a form of visual relief, a return to a more habitable planet. Here the mountains, painted in vibrant hues, surround a billowing stream of benign clouds. This landscape conveys some solace. While not Edenic, it is hospitable.

As Alfred Lord Tennyson wrote in his poem, “Ulysses”, “Come my friends, “T’is not too late to seek a newer world.” ■

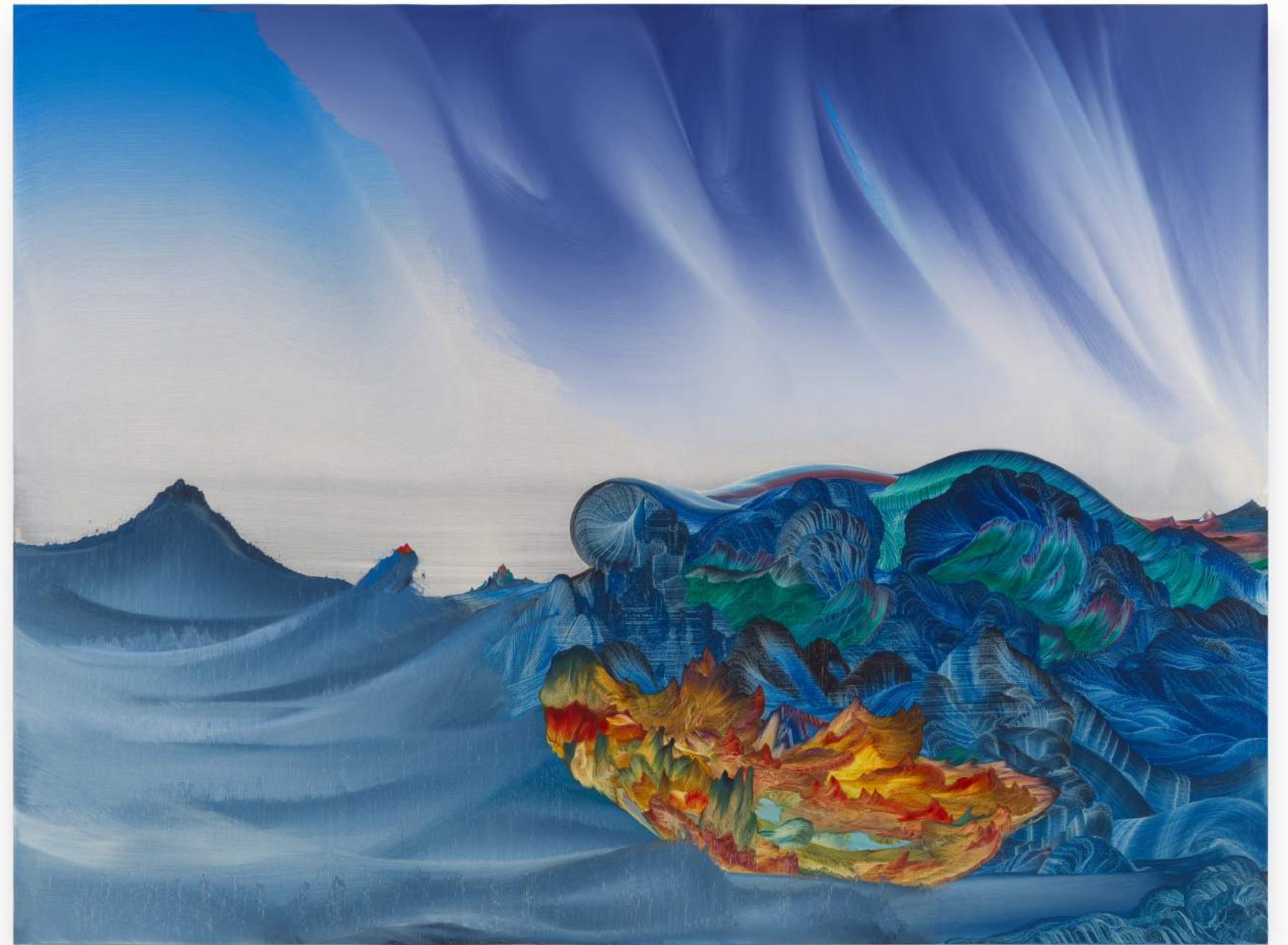
**Phoebe Hoban** has written about culture and the arts for a variety of publications, including *The New York Times*, *New York Magazine*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair*, *GQ*, *Harper’s Bazaar*, *ARTnews*, and *The New York Observer*, among others. She is the author of three artist biographies: *Basquiat: A Quick Killing in Art* (Viking/Penguin 1998-2013; Open Road, 2016), a national bestseller and a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year; *Alice Neel: The Art of Not Sitting Pretty*, (St. Martin’s Press, 2010) named a best book of the year by *New York Magazine*, *The Village Voice*, and *Booklist*; and *Lucian Freud: Eyes Wide Open*, (New Harvest, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014). A paperback edition of her Neel biography with a new introduction was published by David Zwirner Books in April, 2021.

*Patch of Light*, 2022  
Oil on linen  
24 x 32 inches  
61 x 81.3 cm





*Birth of an Island, 2023*  
Oil on linen  
48 x 64 inches  
121.9 x 162.6 cm





*Dopamine Blast*, 2023  
Oil on linen  
48 x 64 inches  
121.9 x 162.6 cm



*Fabular Landscape, 2023*  
Oil on linen  
24 x 32 inches  
61 x 81.3 cm



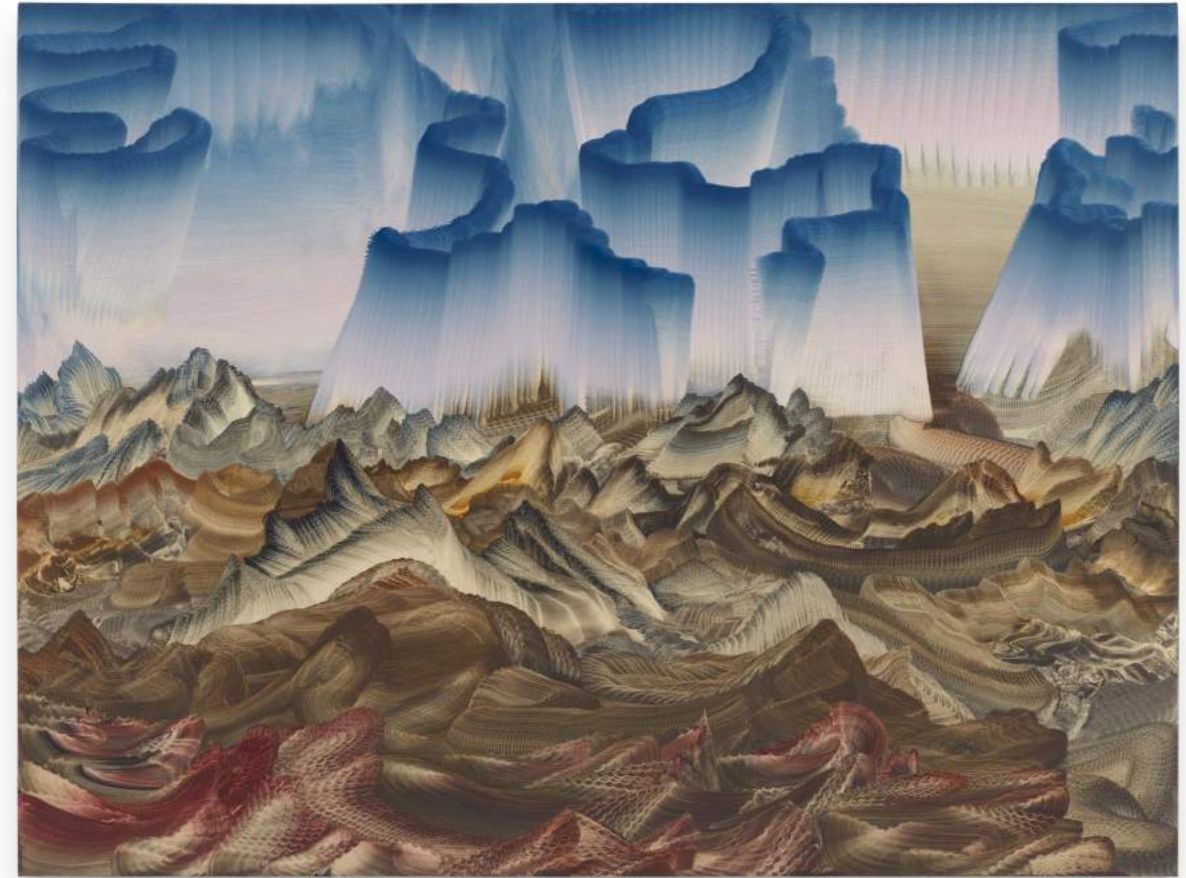


*Innlit*, 2023  
Oil on linen  
24 x 32 inches  
61 x 81.3 cm





*Maze of Rain*, 2023  
Oil on linen  
24 x 32 inches  
61 x 81.3 cm



*Neighbors*, 2023  
Oil on linen  
48 x 64 inches  
121.9 x 162.6 cm





*Resting Mountains, 2023*  
Oil on linen  
24 x 32 inches  
61 x 81.3 cm





*Take It Home*, 2023  
Oil on linen  
24 x 32 inches  
61 x 81.3 cm

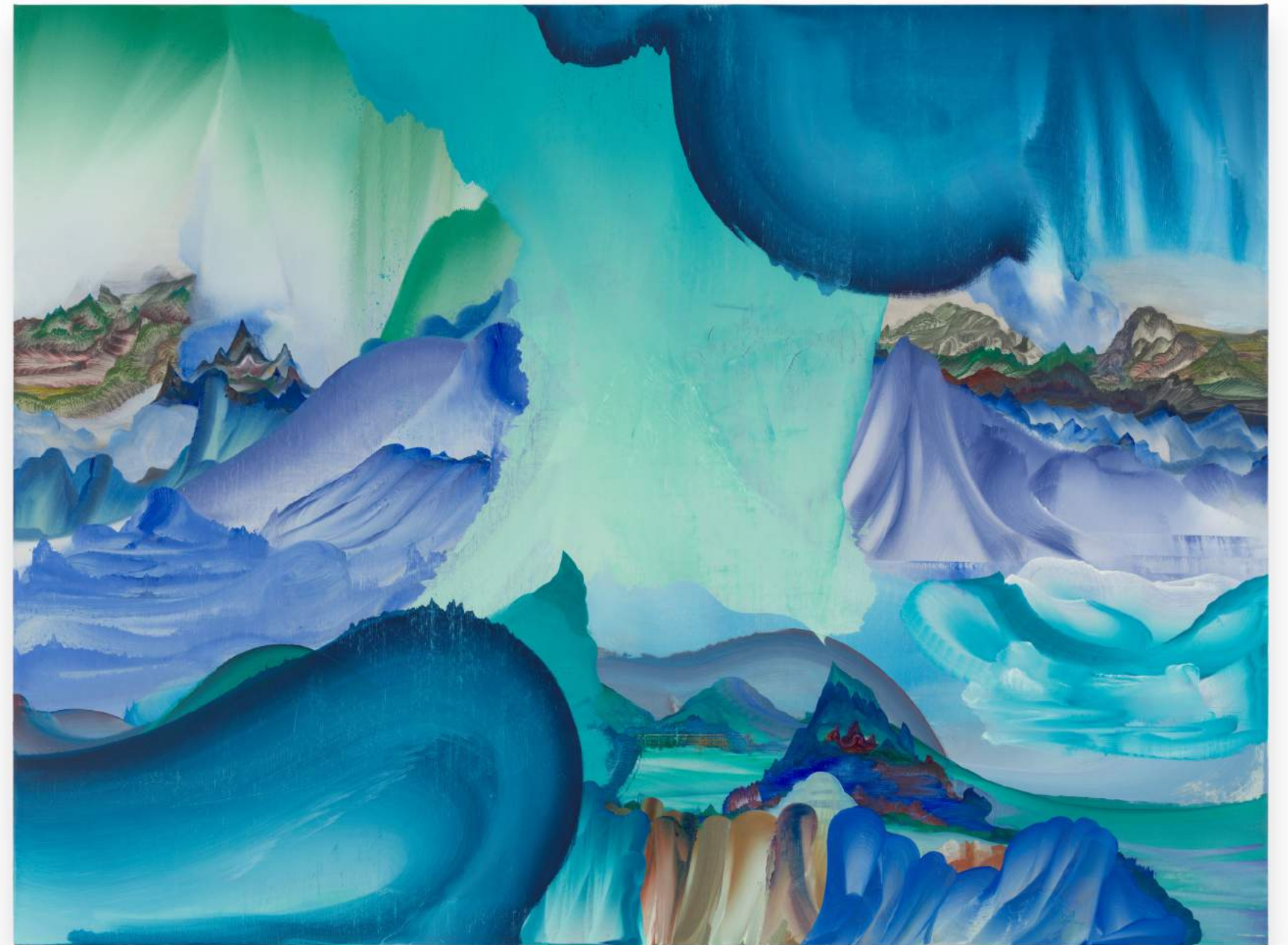


*The Gift of Sleep, 2023*  
Oil on linen  
24 x 32 inches  
61 x 81.3 cm





*Wind Blown Voyagers*, 2023  
Oil on linen  
48 x 64 inches  
121.9 x 162.6 cm





*Cloud Language*, 2024  
Oil on linen  
48 x 64 inches  
121.9 x 162.6 cm



*Sing in the Sky*, 2024  
Oil on linen  
48 x 64 inches  
121.9 x 162.6 cm





*Son of a Dark Womb*, 2024  
Oil on linen  
24 x 32 inches  
61 x 81.3 cm







**ELLIOTT GREEN**

Born in 1960 in Detroit, MI  
Lives and works in Athens, NY

**SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

2024  
Miles McEnery Gallery, New York, NY  
“Imaginary Landscapes,” Ferrara Showman Gallery, New Orleans, LA

2023  
“Ascension,” Pamela Salisbury Gallery, Hudson, NY

2022  
Miles McEnery Gallery, New York, NY  
Weber Fine Art, Greenwich, CT

2021  
“AutoRevisionism,” Pamela Salisbury Gallery, Hudson, NY

2019  
“Syncretism,” Peyton Wright Gallery, Santa Fe, NM  
“Under the Map Room,” Pierogi, Brooklyn, NY  
“Real Atmosphere Imaginary Space,” Hill Gallery, Birmingham, MI  
“Reverb,” Jonathan Ferrara Gallery, New Orleans, LA

2017  
“Human Nature,” Pierogi, Brooklyn, NY

2016  
John Davis Gallery, Hudson, NY

2009  
D’Amelio Terras Gallery, New York, NY

2005  
Singer Gallery, Denver, CO

2003  
Tibor de Nagy Gallery, New York, NY

2002  
Center for Visual Art and Culture, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT

2001  
Postmasters, New York, NY

2000  
Postmasters, New York, NY

1998  
Postmasters, New York, NY

1996  
Krannert Art Museum, Champaign, IL  
I Space, The University of Illinois, Chicago, IL  
Phyllis Kind Gallery, Chicago, IL

1994  
Fawbush, New York, NY

1993  
Fawbush, New York, NY

1991  
Hirschl & Adler Modern, New York, NY  
Carl Hammer Gallery, Chicago, IL

1989  
Hirschl & Adler Modern, New York, NY



GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2022  
“Symbiosis (Part IV)” (curated by Beth Rudin DeWoody), Berkshire Botanical Garden, Stockbridge, MA  
“Green Minds,” MEPAINTSME, digital  
“Psychedelic Landscapes,” Eric Firestone Gallery, New York, NY

2021  
“Landscape & Memory,” Pamela Salisbury Gallery, Hudson, NY  
“You Again” (curated by Franklin Evans), Miles McEnery Gallery, New York, NY  
“Naked In Brooklyn,” Pierogi, Brooklyn, NY

2020  
“2020 Invitational Exhibition of Visual Arts,” American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, NY  
“Three Painters,” The Arts Center at Duck Creek, East Hampton, NY  
“Blue in Green,” Platform Project Space, Brooklyn, NY

2019  
“The Twenty By Sixteen Biennial” (in collaboration with Geoffrey Young), Morgan Lehman Gallery, New York, NY  
“Oh Beautiful – The American Landscape,” The National Arts Club, New York, NY  
“Perspex: american shift” (curated by Franklin Evans), Federico Luger Gallery, Milan, Italy  
“Pre|view Group Exhibition,” Hill Gallery, Birmingham, MI

2018  
“Chain Chain Chain,” Jeff Bailey Gallery, Hudson, NY  
Schoolhouse Gallery, Provincetown, MA  
“Paint, Shape, Form,” Hill Gallery, Birmingham, MI  
“Les Fleurs du Mal,” Pierogi, Brooklyn, NY  
“Summertime,” Tibor de Nagy Gallery, New York, NY  
“La Cage Aux Fauves,” Double V, Marseille, France  
“Oscillation,” Jonathan Ferrara Gallery, New Orleans, LA  
“The Nature Lab” (curated by Eric Wolf), LABspace, Hillsdale, NY

2017  
“Space as Narrative,” Concord Center for the Visual Arts, Concord, MA  
“Provisional Landscapes,” Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, NY  
“Life’s Rich Pageant,” Jeff Bailey Gallery, Hudson, NY  
“Marking Time,” Mark Borghi Fine Art, New York, NY

2016  
“Outside In,” Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects, New York, NY  
“Representing Rainbows,” Gerald Peters Gallery, New York, NY  
“Objecty,” Tibor de Nagy Gallery, New York, NY  
“Faulted Valley Fog,” Transmitter Gallery, Brooklyn, NY  
“Shimmering Substance,” Kleinert/James Center for the Arts, Woodstock, NY  
“Creation Stories” (with Colin Gee), Frank Institute at CR10, Linlithgo, NY  
“Narratives of Enigma,” Studio10, Brooklyn, NY

2015  
“Recipients of Honors and Awards and Invitational Exhibition of Visual Arts,” American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, NY

2010  
“Myths of the Near Future,” Nicole Fiacco Gallery, Hudson, NY  
“Town and Country,” Tibor de Nagy Gallery, New York, NY  
“Recipients of Honors and Awards and Invitational Exhibition of Visual Arts,” American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, NY  
“Team SHaG” (with Amy Sillman and David Humphrey), Clough-Hanson Gallery, Rhodes College, Memphis, TN

2008  
“Ultra-Concentrated Joy,” New York Academy of Art, New York, NY

2007  
“By Invitation Only,” Kinz, Tillou + Feigen, New York, NY  
“Multiple Interpretations,” New York Public Library, New York, NY

2006  
“Après Nous, Le Deluge,” Francis M. Naumann Fine Art, New York, NY  
“Team SHaG,” I Space, University of Illinois, Chicago, IL

2005  
“Visitors from the East,” Billy Shire Fine Arts, Culver City, CA  
“Team SHaG,” Lafayette College, Easton, PA

2004  
“It’s a Wonderful Life: Psychodrama in Contemporary Painting,” SPACES, Cleveland, OH  
“Colored Pencil,” KS Art, New York, NY

2003  
“Comic Release,” Pittsburgh Center for the Arts, Pittsburgh, PA  
Geoffrey Young Gallery, Great Barrington, MA  
“Into the Woods,” Julie Saul Gallery, New York, NY

2001  
“Contemporary Drawings,” Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver, CO  
“Prints from Columbia University,” Susan Inglett Gallery, New York, NY

2000  
“Self-Made Men” (curated by Alexi Worth), DC Moore Gallery, New York, NY  
“Contemporary Art from the Norton Family Collection,” Haggerty Museum of Art, Milwaukee, WI  
“Blurry Lines,” John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, WI  
“The Figure: Another Side of Modernism,” Snug Harbor Cultural Center, Staten Island, NY  
“The End,” ExitArt, New York, NY  
“No Rhyme or...,” Postmasters Gallery, New York, NY  
“Nude and Narrative,” P.P.O.W, New York, NY  
“Cyber Drawings,” Christinerose Gallery, New York, NY

1999  
Center for Print Studies, Columbia University, New York, NY  
Pace Prints, New York, NY  
Tibor de Nagy Gallery, New York, NY

1998  
“Team SHaG,” The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT  
“Team SHaG,” Pamela Auchincloss Gallery, New York, NY

1997  
Campo and Campo, Antwerp, Belgium  
Singer Gallery, Denver, CO  
Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, Boulder, CO  
DiverseWorks Art Space, Houston, TX  
“Team SHaG,” Postmasters, New York, NY

1996  
Thread Waxing Space, New York, NY  
Hill Gallery, Birmingham, MI  
Caren Golden Fine Art, New York, NY  
Exit Art, New York, NY  
Adam Baumgold Fine Art, New York, NY  
Phyllis Kind Gallery, Chicago, IL

1995  
Exit Art, New York, NY  
Three Rivers Art Festival, Pittsburgh, PA  
E.S. Vandam, New York, NY

1994  
Fawbush, New York, NY  
Frumkin-Adams Gallery, New York, NY

1993  
The Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, OH  
Phyllis Kind Gallery, New York, NY  
The Drawing Center, New York, NY  
Krannert Art Museum, Champaign, IL

1992  
Exit Art, New York, NY  
David Beitzel Gallery, New York, NY  
Marsha Fogel Gallery, East Hampton, NY  
Hirschl & Adler Modern, New York, NY

1991  
Galerie Schultz, Cologne, Germany  
Hirschl & Adler Modern, New York, NY  
White Columns, New York, NY



1990  
Pence Gallery, Santa Monica, CA  
Galerie Paule Anglim, San Francisco, CA  
Althea Viafora Gallery, New York, NY

#### FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, & RESIDENCIES

2020  
The Shifting Foundation Grant, Salt Lake City, UT  
Award in Art, The American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, NY

2018  
Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant, New York, NY

2017  
BAU Institute, Cassis, France

2016  
Yaddo Residency, Saratoga Springs, NY

2011  
Jules Guerin Rome Prize, American Academy in Rome, Rome, Italy

2005  
Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant, New York, NY

1999  
Yaddo Residency, Saratoga Springs, NY

1998  
Peter S. Reed Foundation Grant, New York, NY

1995  
Marie Walsh Sharpe Foundation Grant, Colorado Springs, CO

1993  
John Simon Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, New York, NY  
MacDowell Colony Residency, New York, NY

1991  
Yaddo Residency, Saratoga Springs, NY





Published on the occasion of the exhibition

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