

# ***Seduced: the Relevance of Landscape in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century***

***March 13 – May 8, 2009***



All of the works on view in this gallery are landscapes – though perhaps not in the traditional sense. Historically, landscape tended to idealize or romanticize the land rather than to aim for topographic exactitude. Traditional landscapes were often nostalgic, featuring echoes of the past in an effort to counteract the effects of industrialization that were rapidly transforming the land. These works invited the viewer to experience the soothing tranquility of nature with an awe approaching religious reverence. However, in the new environmental reality of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, artists have had to rethink the conventional definition of the genre. This exhibition examines new artistic avenues into this enduring genre, as a means to explore its richness and complexity.

The show should serve as an extension of an art historical lineage, but also as a document of the current ecological crisis and how, as a culture, we are dealing with the decline of our natural environment.

Although this exhibit places artwork in the context of climate change, much of the artwork on view does not carry a directly environmental message or actively promote sustainability. Rather, the art's subtle connection to its subject matter is instrumental to its success. The common thread in this exhibit is the art's ability to function as gentle forms of "protest" art: as beautifully packaged political statements. All of these artists represent either real or imagined ecosystems that are threatened by global warming, development or technology, and yet they all use the landscape's beauty as a counterpoint to its increasing vulnerability. The works included in the show are visually compelling but represent appalling environmental conditions. The show, therefore, deals with the aesthetics of the decline of the environment and presents a vision of a future still concerned with the aesthetic beauty of the landscape, but increasingly worried about its livelihood as well.

Unlike the historical landscape artist, the contemporary landscape artist confronts head-on the after effects of industrialization and urbanization and exposes the plight of the land. These artists request, require even, that viewers be stewards of the land rather than passive observers. The relevance of landscape in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, then, is this active engagement of the viewer. It seduces the viewer with the aesthetic beauty of the landscape and then subtly engages him/her in contemplating its survival.

*Samantha Pinckney, Guest Curator*



**Diane Burko's** series of paintings "Politics of Snow" documents the rapidity of change in natural icons such as the Matterhorn, as well as shrinking glaciers in America and Iceland, in a series of diptychs of historical visual comparisons that contrast past and present glacial activity.



**Leila Daw's** magnificent tapestry-like canvases combine recognizable elements with abstracted maps and symbols to give us a sense of the devastating power of nature. The images are records, maps if you will, of civilizations past and future, the remains of fragile human endeavor on the surface of the planet, of both the ways the land changes us and the ways we change the land.



**Karen Glaser's** photographs taken in Florida's Big Cypress National Preserve represent a geographical location that is both seductive and sickening, with unique and breathtaking ecosystems living alongside unceasing development. Glaser documents these ecosystems' allure and mystery and considers the complicated puzzle of their continued existence, one that is increasingly vulnerable to urban sprawl.



**Joseph Saccio's** sculptures use natural materials (primarily reclaimed wood) joined together in a primitivistic manner, to express personal feelings associated with myth, ritual, loss and rebirth. These works are often brutal in form and meaning but occasionally suggest the possibility of renewal amidst devastation.



**Larry Schwarm's** photographs taken on the prairies of the Flint Hills in his native Kansas document an essential element in the prairie ecosystem: agricultural burns. Fire benefits the land by destroying invasive plants and trees and encouraging new growth. The metaphor is obvious says the artist, "without destruction there is no rebirth: for every act there is an opposing one." Schwarm's work presents a more optimistic view of our current ecological situation in its representation of the beauty and potential in destruction.



**Joseph Smolinski's** works are based on the giant "Franken trees" used to camouflage cellular communication transmitters. His work explores the masking of landscape interventions and questions technology and the future of the natural world. He is interested in the idea of technology copying nature but also in nature reclaiming its territory and absorbing technology.



**Joy Wolke's** sculptures are inspired by the ever-changing natural landscape with concern for its ecological health. In some works she encases natural forms, evoking the increasing delicacy of the world around us and the need for stewardship, so we may continue to enjoy nature's wonders into the future, not just "under glass."

## Exhibition Checklist

### **Diane Burko**

*1907, Okpilak Diptych After Ernest Leffingwell*, 2007

Oil on canvas, 32 x 50 in.

Lent by Locks Gallery

\$7,500

*2004, Okpilak Diptych After Matt Nolan #2*, 2007

Oil on canvas, 32 x 50 in.

Lent by Locks Gallery

\$7,500

*Disappearing 3A*, 2007

Oil on canvas, 24 x 24 in.

Lent by Locks Gallery

\$4,000

*Disappearing 3B*, 2007

Oil on canvas, 24 x 24 in.

Lent by Locks Gallery

\$4,000

### **Leila Daw**

*Global Fan*, 2002

Mixed media, 27 x 22 x 2 in.

Lent by the artist

\$2,500

*Could Have Been a Great City*, 2004

Mixed media/canvas panels, 90 x 170 in.

Lent by the artist

\$33,400

*Who Could Live in Such a Place?* 1999

Mixed media on paper, 24 x 36 in. approx.

Lent by the artist

\$3,340

*Doesn't Stand a Chance*, 2000

Mixed media/canvas panels, 85 x 109 in.

Lent by the artist

\$30,000

### **Karen Glaser**

*Fire in the Swamp #1*, 2007

Pigment print, 22 x 46 in.

Lent by the artist

\$2,650

*Fire in the Swamp #2*, 2007

Pigment print, 22 x 46 in.

Lent by the artist

\$2,650

*Green Gator*, 2007

Pigment print, 22 x 46 in.

Lent by the artist

\$2,650

*Hidden Gator*, 2007

Pigment print, 22 x 46 in.

Lent by the artist

\$2,650

*Floating Hearts*, 2008

Pigment print, 34 x 46 in.

Lent by the artist

\$2,650

*Big Cypress Pollen*, 2007

Pigment print, 34 x 46 in.

Lent by the artist

\$2,650

*Edge of Orange Grove Sink*, 2006

Pigment print, 34 x 46 in.

Lent by the artist

\$2,650

*Dust Storm*, 2008

Pigment print, 34 x 46 in.

Lent by the artist

\$2,650

### **Joseph Saccio**

*Once a Tree*. 2007

Wood, resin, paint, 93 x 36 x 24 in.

Lent by the artist

\$4,000

*Wake For a Dead Forest*. 2007

Wood, resin, paint, 76 x 48 x 4 in.

Lent by the artist

\$5,000

*Memorial: From the Fire*. 1985/2008

Wood, mixed media, 140 x 56 x 36 in.

Lent by the artist

\$5,000

*Our Town*. 2008

Wood, mixed media, 48 x 48 x 8 in.

Lent by the artist.

\$2,000

**Larry Schwarm**

*Breathless – Southern Edwards County*, 2008  
Color photo, 29 x 29 in.  
Lent by the artist  
\$3,500

*Smoldering Pasture at Sunset, North of Emporia, Kansas*, 2008  
Color photo, 29 x 29 in.  
Lent by the artist  
\$3,500

*Yellow Smoke with Black Ash, Lyon County, Kansas*, 2005  
Color photo, 29 x 29 in.  
Lent by the artist  
\$3,500

**Joseph Smolinski**

*Stump*, 2006  
Graphite on paper, 14 x 11 in.  
Lent by the artist and Mixed Greens, NYC  
\$1,050

*The Hunted*, 2008  
Graphite on paper, 14 x 11 in.  
Lent by the artist and Mixed Greens, NYC  
\$1,050

**Old Growth**, 2008

Graphite on paper, 11 x 14 in.  
Lent by the artist and Mixed Greens, NYC  
\$1,050

**Satellite**, 2/3, 2007

Archival inkjet print, 44 x 56 in.  
Lent by the artist and Mixed Greens, NYC  
\$3,000

**Joy Wulke**

*Ascendance Into the Unknown*, 2005  
Branch, leaves, gold leaf, glass  
98 x 60 x 22 in.  
Lent by the artist  
\$3,000

**Cyclical Balance**, 2003

Glass, branch, bone, gold leaf  
15 x 28 x 3 in.  
Lent by the artist  
\$2,000

**Blue Hand Mama**, 2002

Plaster, branches, glass  
16 x 60 x 4 in.  
Lent by the artist  
\$1,800

**Wave From the Future to the Past**, 2009

Glass, branch  
62 x 22 x 11 in.  
Lent by the artist  
\$1,800



**Guilford Art Center**  
411 Church Street  
Guilford, CT 06437  
(203) 453-5947  
[www.guilfordartcenter.org](http://www.guilfordartcenter.org)

**This exhibition is sponsored, in part, by NewAlliance Foundation**