

Marlene Angeja | Tule Fog

September 9 - October 15

Curated by Suzanne L'Heureux

Et. Al. Gallery is pleased to present Tule Fog, featuring recent paintings by Marlene Angeja. The series consists of mostly small works with minimal marks on stitched linen and cotton canvas that reflect Angeja's meditative approach to painting. Her practice is one of being present, paying attention and resisting the urge to do too much. In a piece of writing that accompanies the exhibition, she writes, "The other day I made one mark and that was enough. Everything else was the mindless habit of producing something."

Landscape is always a referent in Angeja's work. Her parents immigrated from Pico Island in the Azores to a dairy farm in Manteca, California; then, the family moved back to the Azores and eventually returned to California. As a result, Angeja explains, "there is always a back and forth in my head between the dry, flat landscape of the San Joaquin Valley and the blue-gray ocean air of Pico Island."

Tule Fog is a dense early morning fog known to the San Joaquin Valley that Angeja remembers viscerally from her youth, as covering everything and dangerously obscuring visibility. It is a kind of quiet sublime. Tule Fog is also a state of not knowing; a murky unconscious place from which dreams and symbols emerge; the fog of depression; the effects of cataracts; being lost in a painting and waiting for clarity.

- Suzanne L'Heureux



What You Thought You Came For, 2021

Once, in a letter to Mr. de Wilde, I wrote that we rush toward understanding, but knowing takes its own time. –Richard Tuttle

My father is in the kitchen baking papo secos (bread rolls). I ask him if we can have some with dinner. He answers, “No. I’m baking these for your journey.”

It's all synthesis and bareness and doubt and failure, material and process, and time. You get in, make terrible mistakes, and find your way out. But this takes a long time. The other day I made one mark and that was enough. Everything else was the mindless habit of producing something.

eliminate clutter
aesthetics and permanence
the self
cultivate bareness and un-self-conscious earnest effort
accumulate gestures
let things evolve
Stay
fear passes through the body

It's not about finish but content. The history of a painting's failures is its content. I don't like failure and so I avoid it. This is life. Painting has to touch that, to convey that through material and time.

Titanium white and titanium buff are opaque enough to cover or alter passages in a painting. This reminds me of the white or beige brushstrokes which cover graffiti on walls. Those odd marks are interesting because, instead of erasing the graffiti, they create layered, hybrid shapes. I am able to find form through those kinds of complex, unconscious, layered marks in my own work. But recently a single, restrained line on a bare canvas has the power to stop me. This is uncomfortable. It feels unproductive. There are long stretches of nothing.

Mornings in the San Joaquin always carry a mist. Its origins are mysterious because there is hardly any moisture to speak of. No water except for the placid irrigation ditches: the giant rainbirds dripping; white transportable Plasticine pipes at the edge of rows of lettuce. We used to call it 'Tule Fog' when we worked alfalfa, loading trucks with square bales in the summer. –Sam Shepard

It is winter. I feel like I'm going to destroy things today. The studio is bitter cold. Anxiety dogs my body. I am looking for composition as a crutch but I don't want to solve or resolve a compositional problem. It's not that painting shouldn't be aesthetic. It's that I don't want to make decisions based on formal aesthetics. I want air but I can't paint it. Air is somewhere in the fabric.

– Marlene Angeja 2022