

I N M A N G A L L E R Y

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 8, 2023

Inman Gallery is pleased to present

DAVID AYLSWORTH
Something Nice With Swans

November 10, 2023 –
January 13, 2024

Opening Reception
Friday November 10, 5:00—7:00pm

Artist in Conversation
Saturday, November 11, 1:00pm



David Aylsworth, *Gazing Down on the Jungfrau*, 2022
oil on canvas, 48 x 48 x 1 1/2 in (121.9 x 121.9 x 3.8 cm)

Inman Gallery is pleased to present *Something Nice with Swans*, a solo exhibition of new paintings by **David Aylsworth**. The exhibition opens **Friday, November 10**, with a reception from 5–7pm, and will continue through January 13, 2024. An artist talk with Luanne Stovall will take place Saturday November 11 at 1pm. This will be Aylsworth's tenth solo show with the gallery since 1992.

For decades David Aylsworth has crafted whimsical abstractions through a language of jutting forms, funky palettes, and layered color fields. Painting with instinct and curiosity, his compositions unfold without a premeditated study as a continuous cycle of actions and reactions, of edits and re-edits. The resulting craggy surface tells a candid history of its own making, with granules of dried paint and muddled colors offering clues to how and when paint was applied. Time arises as a key compositional ingredient, materially squishing the hours between work sessions and folding them into the paint's playful and tender final form.

On view are new, mid-to-large-scale paintings evocative of landscapes populated by monumental forms, complimented by a selection of smaller canvasses. Mesas, icebergs, and mountains, often rendered in a whiteish palette against more saturated backdrops, are layered on vast horizon lines to suggest receding space. In the south gallery a seating area invites the audience to sit, read, play an album, and leisurely enjoy the neighboring paintings. Surrounding the viewer with objects and furniture from the studio, the display enriches our understanding of the work by offering contextual clues of their making. Though not his first

foray into landscape-referential works, Aylsworth returns to the subject with renewed fervor informed by recent readings of Larry McMurtry and Louis L'Amour's notion of "yonderings."

Aylsworth writes:

I am no different from those who are overwhelmed and awed by big sky, long views of mountains, solitary interactions with seemingly silent nature, be it a large body of water, a sudden view of a distant mountain; the majesty of recognizing my dismissible scale when confronted by natural wonders, landscapes without people, the sheer immensity of the land and sea.

But there is also majesty to be found when in the midst of an unexpected relationship between colors or shapes that emerge, seemingly unbidden, from chaotic marks of my making.

In this new body of work, the artist captures the awe of bearing witness to environments both real and imagined through the sensory experience of the picture plane. The implied vastness of these compositions dwarfs the viewer, allowing space for grandeur and wonder to nestle inside. His choice of color, however, noticeably *not* naturalistic, plucks the viewer from the landscape and returns them squarely to the formalist qualities of oil on canvas.

Like all of Aylsworth's paintings, the exhibition pulls its title from show tune lyrics, in this case, the opening number of the 1983 musical *Sunday in the Park with George* which was inspired by Georges Seurat's *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* (1886). In the opening song, we meet Dot, played by Bernadette Peters, modeling as one of the women on a promenade, cheekily complaining about the unpleasant demands of her work ("if you want bread / and respect and attention / not to say connection / modeling's no profession") while Seurat ("George") repeatedly reminds her to stand still as he tries to paint. Sarcastically with concession she sings, "Well there are worse things / Than staring at the water on a Sunday."

Embracing the humor of Dot's initial observation with earnest intent, ***Something Nice with Swans*** celebrates the *being able* to look as well as the looking itself. Indeed, there are worse things than having the time and space to stare at the water, or the sky, or a mountain, or a painting. So put on a record, cozy up, and stare awhile.

SPECIAL EVENT Saturday, November 11, 1:00pm in the galleries

David Aylsworth and Luanne Stovall in conversation.

Join us for an informal conversation between the two artists.

For more information, contact Grace Earick at grace@inmangallery.com, or call 713-526-7800.