

Monumental and Intimate Visions

Jane Culp and Susan Miiller at GCCA Catskill Gallery

Two artists interpret the landscape in the GCCA show "Monumental and Intimate Visions" on display in the 2nd Floor Catskill Gallery through April 10. Jane Culp's muscular charcoal drawings and Susan Miiller's topographic oil paintings create a dialogue about the artists' relationship to nature in this dual solo show.



Jane Culp, Grand Canyon, 30" x 22", charcoal, 1996



Susan Miiller, Platt Falls 14, 7" x 5", oil/canvas, 2008

"Not to have known – as most men have not – either the mountain or the desert is not to have known one's self."

– Joseph Wood Krutch, *The Desert Year*

This quote appears on the inside cover of Jane Culp's monograph of charcoal drawings from the 1990's. Her dual residence in the Western United States and in Freehold, New York entitles her to a good view of the Catskill Mountains and an honest appraisal of the Grand Canyon, Death Valley, Utah's Zion Canyon.

Culp's landscapes appear experiential in dark, gestural lines, and she used not just the wrist but the whole arm, back and body to achieve a black and white tension with the rugged feel of an uphill hike or a controlled stumble headed down a rocky incline. She refers to this work as abstractions, but the viewer can

feel the ancient rocks' presence, feel the movement through space in these 20 x 30-inch compositions.

Susan Miiller's *Souvenirs* reference the idea of taking something home from a visit. Starting with photographs, Miiller builds collage pieces to inform later works in paint. Her subject depicts familiar tourist destinations – Greene County's waterfalls – the same ones seen in turn of the century post cards, hiker's snapshots and in the works of landscape artists from the Hudson River School forward. This set of small scale oils reads like a pictorial series, offering variations on a theme. The subject is romantic and traditionally seen from a vantage point and distance that feels familiar.

Miiller's painting technique is unusual. She works additively and subtractively in her studio to emphasize the formal elements, stylizing and abstracting the subject as she creates a re-membered version of these magical places. The palette is mostly in a range of nostalgic warm-toned golds and browns, painted in a loose brushy style suggesting the movement of water over rocks.

Culp received her BFA at Washington University and her MFA at Yale, later studying as a Fulbright scholar in Italy. The drawings featured in this exhibit mark her days as Artist in Residence at Yosemite, Death Valley and Joshua Tree National Parks as well as Anza Borrego State Park in Southern California. She has mounted solo exhibits at the Queens College of the City of New York, the Bowery Gallery and the Painting Gallery in New York City amongst others. Culp's charcoal masterpieces have been featured in eight museum exhibitions throughout the West.

Miiller studied art at SUNY New Paltz for her BFA and later received her MFA from the University of North Texas, returning in 1999 to SUNY New Paltz as a lecturer on painting and drawing. She has exhibited nationwide including the Samuel Dorsky Museum, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and the Dallas Museum of Art among others. Her artwork is included in many important public and private collections including The Houston Museum of Fine Arts, Sterling Software and Centex Corporation. Miiller's 2006 Catskill Conservation Center residency at the Platt Clove Cabin may have influenced her work on waterfalls.

The GCCA Catskill Gallery, located at 398 Main Street in Catskill, is open Monday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; 2nd and 3rd Saturdays Noon to 8 p.m. For more information, call 943-3400.