



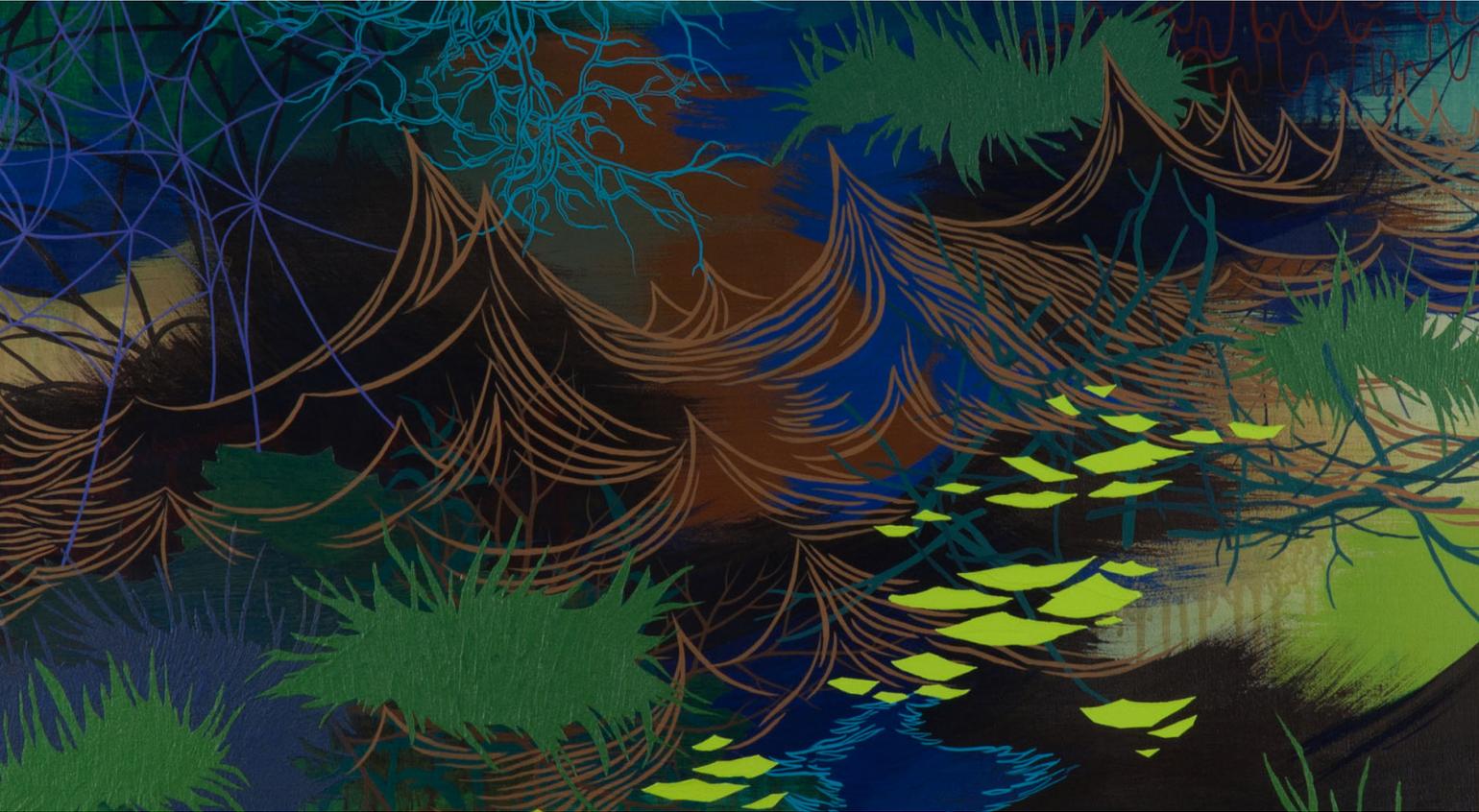
# SUSAN DANKO

April 13–June 3, 2017  
Ruth C. Horton Gallery

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# SUSAN DANKO

*Evocative landscapes. Real and imagined. Exquisite and dreamy.  
A beautiful, yet elusive and increasingly vulnerable reality*



▲ *Deluge*, 2012 (detail), acrylic on canvas, 28 x 30 x 1 ½ inches, collection of Dr. Kathleen L. Berkner

The natural environment—its beauty and its increasing vulnerability—is the source of inspiration for Susan Danko’s acrylic on canvas paintings. Rendered with fluid swaths of rich, often bold color, her paintings depict dreamy, almost unreal scenes of the forest floor, ponds, thickets, or evenings in the woods.

Constructed from both memory and observation, Danko’s lyrical but always evocative landscapes arise in the artist’s mind from real and imagined environmental scenes. In a process that begins with hiking and observing nature, Danko filters her perceptions of the natural world into poetic but subtly charged landscapes. The artist drenches her canvases with vivid color and in a confluence of abstraction and representation renders the contours of plants, stenciled outlines of trees and branches into forms that seem to float across her paintings’ surfaces.





▲ *Scape Series*, 1999-2017 (detail), acrylic on panel, or acrylic and mixed media on panel, 46 works, each 7 x 5 ½ x 1 ½ inches, overall installation dimension variable

## About the Artist

Susan Danko received a bachelor of fine arts in 1998 at the Cleveland Institute of Art in Cleveland, Ohio. She is the recipient of a number of fellowships and awards, including a 2015 Ohio Percent for Art Commission and an Ohio Arts Council 2013 Individual Excellence Award, among others. Danko's work has been consistently exhibited in galleries and art spaces in the Ohio region, including SPACES Gallery (2017), Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland (2008), and the Butler Institute of Art (2001). In addition to being shown regularly at Bonfoey Gallery in Cleveland, Danko's work was shown in 2014 at the Angela Meleca Gallery in Columbus, in 2009 at the Cheryl Hazan Gallery in New York City (2009), and in the 2006 Scope Art Fair in New York City. Danko's work is in the Cleveland Clinic Foundation, in addition to numerous private collections in the region. She lives and works in Parma, Ohio.

## Works in the exhibition

Except where indicated, all works courtesy of the artist and Bonfoey Gallery, Cleveland, Ohio

*Blue Landscape*, 2016  
Acrylic on canvas  
68 x 96 x 1 ½ inches

*Secondary Succession*, 2013  
Acrylic on canvas  
70 x 96 x 1 ½ inches

*Wood Tangle*, 2011  
Acrylic on canvas  
28 x 30 x 1 ½ inches

*Early Freeze*, 2016  
Acrylic on canvas  
28 x 30 x 1 ½ inches

*Marsh Fire*, 2013  
Acrylic on canvas  
40 x 52 x 1 ½ inches

*Fallen Wood*, 2011  
Acrylic on canvas  
28 x 30 x 1 ½ inches  
Collection of Rita and Larry Lichtenberg

*Forest Pattern*, 2014  
Acrylic on canvas  
36 x 48 x 1 ½ inches

*Hard Rain*, 2012  
Acrylic on canvas  
28 x 30 x 1 ½ inches

*Green*, 2001  
Acrylic on canvas  
36 x 48 x 1 ½ inches

*About a Forest*, 2014  
Acrylic on canvas  
24 x 30 x 1 ½ inches

*Deluge*, 2012  
Acrylic on canvas  
28 x 30 x 1 ½ inches  
Collection of Dr. Kathleen L. Berkner

*Scape Series*, 1999-2017  
Acrylic on panel, or acrylic and mixed media on panel  
46 works, each 7 x 5 ½ x 1 ½ inches  
Overall installation dimension variable

Though alluring with their seductive coloration; floating, almost dreamy imagery; and perspectives that recede into the horizon, what is portrayed in these canvases is beauty—but not pristine, untouched beauty. Recalling the Fauve artists who used vibrant, saturated color to denote heightened emotion and urgency,<sup>1</sup> Danko's use of vivid, sometimes discordant hues punctuates what were once perhaps idyllic scenes. The suggestion here, sometimes nuanced and other times more accentuated, is that of invasion or toxic threat, a key issue in the artist's work that reflects her keen sensitivity to and concern with environmental issues. For Danko, these works "convey a new reality, a world where invasive species, extreme weather, and pollution are steadily becoming the new normal, a world of nature caught in a visceral state of flux between destruction and renewal."<sup>2</sup> This is conveyed in works, such as *Marsh Fire* (2013), a toxic landscape on fire; *Hard Rain* (2012), with its suggestion of extreme weather due to climate change; and *Green* (2001), which implies a massive leak or seeping chemical invasion. In *Secondary Succession* (2013), though, Danko offers a glimmer of hope in that she intends the painting to impart her amazement with nature's regenerative power and ability to reclaim and rebound from environmental devastation.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, what Danko portrays in her art is a world where the natural is increasingly encroached upon and increasingly fused with the artificial, with the imminent and pervasive danger that presents. Even so, these paintings are unapologetically beautiful as they strive and reach for the elusive—a paradise still present but tragically receding from our grasp.

Margo Ann Crutchfield  
Curator at Large

<sup>1</sup>Fauvism was an early 20th-century movement in Modern art that developed in France between 1904 and 1910. Members of this group, which included Henri Matisse, Andre Derain, and Georges Rouault, were referred to as "the Fauves" ("wild beasts"). They used simplified forms and intense color in their art to convey emotional states.

<sup>2</sup>Danko quoted in her artist statement of February 14, 2017

<sup>3</sup>Ibid

▼ *Hard Rain*, 2012 (detail), acrylic on canvas, 28 x 30 x 1 ½ inches

► *Marsh Fire*, 2013 (detail)  
Acrylic on canvas  
40 x 52 x 1 ½ inches





▲ *Blue Landscape*, 2016, acrylic on canvas, 68 x 96 x 1 ½ inches

**Also on view**

Diana Cooper: *HighWire*, 2016  
Grand Lobby

**Gallery Hours**

Tuesday–Friday, 10 AM–5:30 PM  
Saturday, 10 AM–4 PM  
Admission free

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