



*A Woods I Did Not Know*, 2014  
 Flashe, house paint, and acrylic on Tyvek  
 Wood and mirrored structures  
 Collection of the artist

### About the Artist

Born in Cambridge, Mass., 1959

Lives in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Since gaining national recognition in 2005 with his installation *Love Poem (10 Minutes after the End of Gravity)* at the Bellwether Gallery in New York City, Adam Cvijanovic has shown his work in numerous one-person and group exhibitions at such prestigious venues as The Armand Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Center, Los Angeles, Calif. (2005); Mass MOCA, North Adams, Mass. (2007); The Royal Academy of Arts, London (2006); the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg (2007); the Walker Art Center (2008); the Krasner Art Museum, Champaign, Ill. (2008); the Contemporary Art Center, Athens, Greece (2009); and the Art, Design & Architecture Museum, University of Santa Barbara, Calif. (2012); among others.

Major site-specific installations of Cvijanovic's work have been presented at the Liverpool Biennial, Tate Liverpool, UK (2008); PROSPECT.1, New Orleans Biennial, New Orleans (2008); the 18th Biennale of Sydney, Australia (2012); and the Fifth Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, Moscow (2013).

Cvijanovic is represented by Postmasters Gallery in New York City.

All photography of *A Woods I Did Not Know*  
 © Ryan Dudik



Cvijanovic: final touches during the installation of  
*A Woods I Did Not Know*

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Artist statement, in correspondence with the curator, fall 2013. Cvijanovic also comments that this installation has roots in and evokes the mirrored distortions and sense of wonder of 19th-century old carnival fun houses at country fairs. He also makes the comparison of this installation with an analogue version of the kind of environment created for a video game — a 21st-century space activated by the explorations of the user



*The River*, 2012  
 Flashe, house paint, and acrylic on Tyvek  
 Wood structures  
 Installation at the 18<sup>th</sup> Biennale of Sydney, Australia (2012)



**ADAM CVIJANOVIC**  
*Landscape: Another Dimension*  
 January 17–March 2, 2014  
 Miles C. Horton Jr. Gallery

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“There is great pleasure for me in describing the things we see—mountains, rivers, falling buildings, dusty skies—letting them become a place to find, a road or a valley, with one color sitting on another color, the thing itself, pigment all the way to the border of peripheral vision. I have always been drawn to images that fill the room—frescos, panoramas, and full-screen cinema. Creating space, not just an arbitrary and abstracted space, but also a perspectival space... ”

—Adam Cvijanovic

# LANDSCAPE : *Another Dimension*

In many ways these words encapsulate the spirit and motivation behind Adam Cvijanovic’s unique and wildly imaginative approach to the tradition of landscape painting. Using an innovative technique of house paint and Flashe on Tyvek, the synthetic material used for FedEx envelopes and housing insulation, Cvijanovic creates what he describes as “mobile frescoes.” Monumental in scale, his paintings are applied in sections to walls or constructed surfaces like wallpaper, then removed and rolled up at the end of exhibitions. Cvijanovic’s paintings have occupied expansive walls, ceilings, and entire gallery spaces, infusing an often implausible, even surreal sensibility into urban and pastoral landscapes. In a fusion of painting and sculpture, the artist’s work over the last several years has progressively moved onto three-dimensional sculptural forms. For the 2012 Sydney Biennial, he created a 15 ft. high by

40 ft. long spiraled wood structure painted with an aerial view of two rivers converging—a structure that one could literally walk through.

For his site-specific installation for the Center for the Arts at Virginia Tech, Cvijanovic extends the sculptural direction in his work by creating a three-dimensional environment that viewers can enter into and walk through. Created in response to Virginia’s New River Valley, the installation, titled *A Woods I Did Not Know*, consists of an expansive, panoramic 7 ½ ft. high by 125 ft. long painting on Tyvek, mounted in sections to a circuitous maze-like formation of wood and mirrored structures.

With a command of paint, exceptional skill, and a keen appreciation of the landscape’s beauty, Cvijanovic depicts an Uplands Appalachian forest in late fall. This recreation, a confluence of both

the artist’s memory of actual sites and images from his imagination, is representational. The imagery is recognizable. It looks real. Trees—bared with branches rendered in rich browns and grays—are everywhere, immediately in front or gently receding towards a distant horizon. Leaves blanket the dappled forest floor. Intermittent clusters of golden or russet leaves linger on as winter advances into the woods. At one end, an azure stream lulls over rocks, pooling at the floor. Around the corner, an abandoned house is buried deep in the woods, mysterious, beckoning. It’s all there, meticulously and beautifully rendered. And familiar. For those who know the woods here, experiencing Cvijanovic’s rendition is immediate and

palpable. Reassuring for a moment that . . . yes, I’ve been here, I know this place. Yet within moments of stepping into Cvijanovic’s forest, all that changes.

Upon entering one of several pathways into the gently winding maze, one is surrounded by floor-to-ceiling woodland images, interspersed with mirrored surfaces in what becomes an immersive all-encompassing visual experience. Images of trees, branches, and viewers themselves—reflect, refract, morph, and blend into each other as one wanders further into the piece. Perspective becomes warped with views in some directions that duplicate, multiply, and extend ad infinitum. At one moment you see yourself or others reflected in the mirrored surfaces. Around a column, or down another pathway, your reflection vanishes then reappears in the distance. The longer you gaze into and wander through the installation, the more complex and visually mesmerizing it becomes. As the artist

remarked, “the mirrors have the effect of shattering the painting and mixing it up throughout the space. The effect is not just a of a painting that you can walk into, but of a painting of an environment that moves and recombines with itself as you pass through it.”<sup>1</sup> In what becomes a heightened sensory experience of resplendent woods in late fall, the familiar becomes unfamiliar; the known becomes unknown, our mooring unhinged, and our sense of place uncertain.

In this sense, Cvijanovic’s installation becomes a profound exploration of place, of our relationship to the land, to nature, to beauty even; but more than that, the work explores our relationship to

a space that is not only geographic. Cvijanovic’s exploration of the woods veers towards a conceptual examination of space—one that is perceptual, and ultimately philosophical.

Among the references from history, literature, and art that inform Cvijanovic’s work is the 13th-century Florentine poet Dante Alighieri and the opening verse of his *Inferno*.

Halfway through the journey of our life

I found myself within a dark forest

For I had lost the straight path . . .

In Dante’s classic masterpiece of European literature, the author embarks on a vivid, excruciating, and ultimately exhilarating journey of the soul through hell, purgatory, and paradise. In a different time and in a different place, we also embark in Cvijanovic’s *A Woods I Did Not Know*, on a vivid journey, passing

through a real and imagined landscape—“a fractal space,” as the artist describes it—one in which perspective shifts, complicates, and confounds our sense of where we are and what we are seeing. In the midst of the extraordinary beauty of the woods that Cvijanovic portrays, it is in this wondrous, but uneasy moment—of being immersed, momentarily

lost, or finding one’s way through this mind-bending space—that the artist brilliantly expands all notions of the landscape tradition into another dimension.

Margo Ann Crutchfield  
Curator at Large  
Center for the Arts at Virginia Tech



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**Front Cover:**  
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