

NANCY DEPEW EXPLORES THE CURIOSITY OF NATURE



Insight, oil on canvas, 36" x 26"

Haynes Galleries by Gracie Pratt

When asked what inspires her work, Nancy Depew had one answer: “curiosity.” The work of this New Jersey-based artist lives up to its initial impulse, reflecting the mystery and intricacy of nature with fluid portraits of lush woods and meticulously detailed single flowers. Her subjects are captured with precision and are simultaneously delicate and robust.

Depew’s work bridges the gap between traditional realism and contemporary style, with pieces ranging from miniatures, like *Gem* at 7 x 8.5 inches, to expansive forestscapes like *Pulse*, which measures 44 x 64 inches. Haynes Galleries is currently featuring seventeen pieces, with a variety of sizes and natural subjects.



Illumination, oil on panel, 25" x 34"

Depew’s curiosity is often piqued by objects as personal as the ones in her own garden, like the white peony featured in her floral still life *Touch*. “I found the white peonies languishing in a hedge row on my home’s property when I moved in fifteen years ago. They all feel like old friends,” she says. Her work is intensely personal because of its association to objects that she knows and loves, yet she tries to distance herself from the object when she paints. It is not the object she is trying to replicate in her work, rather an experience.

“I am not interested in documenting the flower for its own sake,” she says. “I am interested in the

collaboration between myself and that flower. Artists have used flowers as subject matter in still life paintings for hundreds of years, and yet it would be a terrible mistake to believe that their potential to be used as a means for delving into the nature of human experience has been exhausted. I use the flower as a vehicle, loaded with all the implications a living organism embodies. It provides me with a means for channeling something internal, fragile, and elusive that no other subject could accomplish.”



Touch, oil on canvas, 26” x 40”

Depew also proves herself skilled in capturing the human form, as she does articulately in her painting *Insight*. This painting features a nude woman, eyes closed, head tilted upwards. It is a pensive piece, reflecting on the mood that the subject’s point of view evokes. The painting has a dual focus. The flowers occupy as much of the portrait as the woman does, reinforcing Depew’s sense of interconnectedness between the human form and nature. She says, “We are not separate from nature, but part of it.”

Depew’s work hinges on her commitment to what she calls the “visual idea.” Defining it, Depew says that “our day to day experience is [primarily] visual and has little or nothing to do with words or logical thought.” When she paints, Depew tries to forget about verbal communication. Instead, she says, “I use visual imagery and combine it with my own experience to investigate the intuitive aspect of the subject. I manipulate visual information to explore a metaphysical terrain. I dig into the nature of experience.”



Revelation, oil on canvas, 48" x 34"

Depew received her Master of Fine Arts from the State University of New York in Albany and has since had an impressive artistic career. Over the past three decades, Depew's work has been featured in over eighty combined solo exhibitions and group shows across the country, and this is the second time her work has been displayed at Haynes Galleries. Depew is eager to

speak about the appeal of such a gallery: “It is every artist’s dream to be able to exhibit where their work will be truly understood and appreciated, as I believe it is at the Haynes Galleries.” Haynes Galleries offers a sophisticated space for viewing Depew’s work.



Pulse, oil on canvas, 44” x 62”

An interesting component of Depew’s art is that it responds to her initial curiosity without killing it. It entices viewers. Her exhibit at Haynes Galleries offers an opportunity for viewing her work in person, and Depew’s hope is that her work will encourage viewers to have their own unique experience.

Nancy Depew’s vignette show *Nancy Depew: Figures, Flowers & Forests* will be on display at Haynes Galleries until April 11. The gallery is located at 1600 Division Street on the Music Row Roundabout in Nashville and is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. or by appointment.

For more information, visit www.haynesgalleries.com.