

DOLBY CHADWICK GALLERY

Terry St. John

July 10—August 30, 2014

It may be surprising to learn that, as an undergraduate at the University of California, Berkeley, Terry St. John studied sociology, not the fine arts. By the time he fell in love with painting, he was a college senior and deep into the throes of his social science degree. But that didn't stop him from pursuing art. He took lessons from a friend who was studying under Richard Diebenkorn at the California College of Arts and Crafts (now called the California College of the Arts) and immersed himself in an artistic social circle. St. John recalls how "above all else, I just wanted to paint paintings. Painting somehow gave me an opening to the future and a sense of hope... it was salutary."

Diebenkorn's indirect influence on his art by way of his friend is still evident in St. John's work today, as is the art of others involved in the Bay Area Figurative Movement, including David Park and James Weeks. Like Weeks—who St. John studied with in 1960 prior to pursuing an MFA at the California College of Arts and Crafts—St. John also focuses on strong forms, a wide spectrum of saturated colors, and the play of light. His paintings, however, are much less precise, much freer, and far looser than Weeks's. Though he uses color blocking to build his compositions' basic scaffolding, St. John allows his brush to generously drag numerous colors through different forms, thereby diffusing edges and enhancing movement. In *Diablo* (2010), for example, the hilltop appears to practically explode into the sky, which is itself nearly indivisible from the ocean. A brush carrying yellow, white, beige, and blue paint forges textured strokes that zip across the bottom of the painting, asking us to consider what they are and why they are there.

In the last two years, St. John's paintings have become increasingly abstract. They are still figurative in that the curve of a model's torso, the mass of a hillside, or the expanse of a field remain recognizable. But these newer works introduce an extra dimension that has, paradoxically, served to simplify them. Given St. John's attention to light, this push toward abstraction is in many ways part of a natural evolution. "Light is transformative," the artist explains, "it impacts everything I do. As a landscape painter, the time of day you paint makes a big difference." St. John—who always paints directly from his subject matter—notes how the high-noon sun bleaches out all shadow and that it's not until later, when the sun is setting, that more pronounced shadows start to create interesting patterns and dramatic tension. But rather than picking one "moment" to paint, St. John harnesses the movement of the sun and welcomes the fresh forms it offers as he collapses its arc into a single painting.

Though he relies on fluorescent and incandescent lights when painting models in his studio, St. John foregrounds light indoors just as much as he does when painting outside. In fact, he creates

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what he refers to “living room-landscapes” for his models, which he fills with exotic plants and a healthy dose of ersatz decor. Verdant and unfolding, with highly tactile surfaces akin to topographic maps, these rooms figure as extensions of his landscapes. And while the model is always important in that she’s a human being whose unique personality influences the artist and thus the painting, her weight is nevertheless equal to that of every other element in the composition. The model’s features in *Woman Landscape* (2013), for example, are not treated with a sense of preciousness you might expect from a figure-painter; even her face is rendered using the same striated smudges and strokes used to articulate her surroundings. She is one part of a gestalt that could not exist without her, without the anchoring wedge of green to her right, the vertical partitioning of sea and sky across the upper register, or any other element in the painting.

It is through his masterful use of light that St. John is able to fold his model into the overall composition, deftly weaving her body into the surrounding environment. To ensure his paintings cohere as successful abstractions, St. John flips them upside down. Doing so enables him to divorce himself from the subject and arrange forms, lines, and colors so that they agree and flow as a whole. Recent extended working trips to Thailand have continued to sharpen his ability to see such patterns and relationships. After having lived and practiced in the Bay Area almost exclusively, Thailand offers him the peace, quiet, and freedom necessary to rethink the fundamentals of painting: “I have no responsibilities in Thailand. In Thailand, I am free to absorb all that’s around me, to think deeply about light and form, to focus on my painting and what’s before me.”

Born in Sacramento, CA, in 1934, Terry St. John earned his BA in sociology from the University of California, Berkeley in 1958 followed by an MFA from the California College of Arts and Crafts in 1966. From 1970 until 1990, St. John was curator of modern painting at the Oakland Museum of California, after which he served for six years as the chairperson of the art department at the Notre Dame de Namur University in Belmont, CA. His art can be found in the permanent collections of the de Young, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; the Oakland Museum of California; the San Jose Museum of Art; and the Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, CA.

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Terry St. John

EDUCATION

- 1966 MFA from California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland, CA
- 1960 California School of Fine Arts, San Francisco, CA
- 1958 BA from University of California, Berkeley, CA

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2014 Terry St. John, Dolby Chadwick Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2011 Terry St. John, Dolby Chadwick Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Recent Painting, Figure and Landscape, San Marco Gallery at Dominican University,
San Rafael, CA
- 2006 Terry St. John, Hackett-Freedman Gallery, San Francisco, CA (also '03, '01, '99, '96)
Hackett-Freedman Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2004 Terry St. John: Bay Area Landscape Painter, Triton Museum, San Jose, CA
Triton Museum, San Jose, CA
- 2002 Model/Artist: Figurative Drawings 1961–2001, Wiegand Gallery, Notre Dame de Namur
University, Belmont, CA
- 1998 Hearst Art Gallery, St. Mary's College, Moraga, CA
- 1994 Contemporary Realist Gallery, San Francisco, CA (also '91)
- 1991 College of Notre Dame, Belmont, CA
- 1990 Fresno Metropolitan Museum, Fresno, CA
- 1989 Vulcan Cafe Gallery, Oakland, CA
- 1985 Victor Fischer Galleries, Oakland, CA (also '88)
Eloise Packard-Smith Gallery, University of California, Santa Cruz, CA
- 1984 Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE
- 1982 Walnut Creek Art Center, Walnut Creek, CA
- 1981 Brook House, Orinda, CA (also '83)
- 1978 University of Mississippi, Oxford, MS
- 1977 Robert Mondavi Winery, Napa, CA
- 1975 Stevenson College, University of California, Santa Cruz, CA
Holy Names College, Oakland, CA

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2014 Breakfast Group, Richmond Art Center, Richmond, CA
- 2013 Breakfast Group, Carl Cherry Center for the Arts, Carmel, CA
Evolution of Style, Arts Benicia Gallery, Benicia, CA
- 2007 Landscapes: Rural and Urban Realities, Triton Museum of Art, Santa Clara, CA
- 2000 Hackett-Freedman Gallery Artists, Shasta College Art Gallery, Redding, CA
- 1999 Contemporary Bay Area Painters, Diane Nelson Gallery, Laguna Beach, CA
Side by Side: Plein Air Paintings by Lundy Siegriest and Terry St. John, Museum of Art &
History, Santa Cruz, CA
Recent Work: Paintings by Terry St. John, Dennis Hare, Larry Cohen, John Dubrow, and
others, Hackett-Freedman Gallery, San Francisco, CA

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- 1998 Select Works: A Group Exhibition featuring Emerging and Established Artists,
Hackett-Freedman Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 1997 10th Anniversary Exhibition, Hackett-Freedman Gallery, San Francisco, CA
A Celebration of Three Decades, Berkeley Art Center, Berkeley, CA
- 1996 CCAC: Past, Present and Future, California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland, CA
Substance and Light: The Work of Four Bay Area Painters, California Museum of
Art, Santa Rosa, CA
- 1995 Contemporary Plein Air Painters, The Art Museum of Santa Cruz County, Santa Cruz,
CA
Plein Air Painters, Pope Gallery, Santa Cruz, CA
- 1994 New Bay Area Painting, Contemporary Realist Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Bay to Delta, Weir Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Landscape Into Art, Florence Ludins-Katz Memorial Gallery, National Institute of Art &
Disabilities, Richmond, CA
Group Exhibition, Thomas Babeor & Co., La Jolla, CA
- 1993 Contemporary Realism, Central and Northern California Landscapes, Monterey
Peninsula Museum of Art, Monterey, CA
Vanishing Point: A Look at Contemporary Landscape Painting, Bedford Gallery, Walnut
Creek, CA
Bay Area Painting, Contemporary Realist Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Landscape, Skyline College, San Bruno, CA
These Are a Few of My Favorite Things: The Fine Art of Collecting Art, Gallery Concord,
Concord, CA
- 1992 A Day in the Country, California Landscape Painting, I Wolk Gallery, St. Helena, CA
- 1991 Artists from Contemporary Realist Gallery, New York Academy of Art, New York, NY (92)
- 1991 The Breakfast Group, Holy Names College, Oakland, CA
New Bay Area Painting II, Contemporary Realist Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Bay Area Landscape Painting, Santa Rosa Junior College Art Gallery, Santa Rosa, CA
- 1990 Once By The Pacific, Gallery North, Setauket, NY
Slopes of Diablo II, Valley Art Gallery, Walnut Creek, CA
Fifth Avenue Realists, Joseph Chowning Gallery, San Francisco, CA
The Outdoor Studio: Paintings of Contra Costa, Civic Arts Gallery, Walnut Creek, CA
- 1989 New Bay Area Painting, Contemporary Realist Gallery, San Francisco, CA
The Trading Company, Center Gallery, University of California Extension, San Francisco,
CA
Terry St. John and Friends, Banaker Gallery, Walnut Creek, CA
Views of Diablo, Los Medanos College, Pittsburg, CA
Marine Views, City of Concord Art Gallery, Concord, CA
- 1988 Breakfast Club, Wiegand Gallery, College of Notre Dame, Belmont, CA
- 1985 Bay Area Seen, Hall of Flowers, San Francisco, CA
- 1984 Robert Poplack, Paul Carey, Lundy Siegriest, Bill Steiger and Terry St. John, Glastonbury
Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 1982 Rolling Hills and Purple Cows, Walnut Creek Art Center, Walnut Creek, CA
- 1980 Notre Dame de Namur University, Belmont, CA
- 1978 Jerry Carlin, Anthony Holdsworth, Terry St. John, Berkeley Art Center, Berkeley, CA

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- Lundy Siegriest, Terry St. John, Santa Rosa Junior College, Santa Rosa, CA
1977 20 Bay Area Artists, Richmond Art Center, Richmond, CA
Christmas Giving, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA
1976 Done in the Open, Triangle Gallery, San Francisco, CA
1975 Lester Gallery, Inverness, CA
1973 First Invitational, Palo Alto Cultural Center, Nanny Goat Hill Gallery, Palo Alto, CA
1972 Three, College of Notre Dame, Belmont, CA
1966 Contemporary Southern Artists, (traveling exhibition, 1967)
1965 James D. Phelan Award Show, California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco,
CA
Lucien Labaudt Gallery, San Francisco, CA

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 2011 Selz, Peter, "Terry St. John," Art in America, October 2011.
2006 Campion, Peter, "Terry St. John," Terry St. John: Studio Figures and Landscape
Paintings, Hackett-Freedman Gallery, San Francisco, CA.
"Hackett-Freedman Gallery proudly presents," Concierge Newsletter.
"Terry St. John at Hackett-Freedman Gallery", Art News, October, 2006.
2004 Ganglehoff, Bonnie, "On the Verge," Southwest Art, April.
2003 Nixon, Bruce, Terry St. John: New Figurative and Landscape Paintings, Hackett-
Freedman Gallery, San Francisco, CA.
1999 Carasso, Roberta, "Bay Area painters exhibit at Nelson," Laguna News Post, November
11.
W.S. Di Piero, On Terry St. John, Hackett-Freedman Gallery, San Francisco, CA.
Long, Andrew, Art & Antiques, March, p. 36.
Machotka, Pavel, Style & Psyche: The Art of Lundy Siegriest and Terry St. John,
Hampton Press, Creskill, NJ.
1998 Bowen, Dorothy, "Link to the past of plein-air painting," Contra Costa Sun, January 7.
Thym, Jolene, "Lasting Impressions," The Oakland Tribune, January 10.
Asche, Jennifer, "Landscape Artist Heads for the Hills," San Francisco Chronicle,
January 2.
1997 Hackett-Freedman Gallery, 1987-1997, Hackett-Freedman Gallery, San Francisco, CA.
1996 Machotka, Pavel, Terry St. John, Hackett-Freedman Gallery, San Francisco, CA.
Jenkins, Steven, "Terry St. John at Hackett-Freedman Gallery," Artweek, December, p.
18.
Bass, Ruth, "Realism," ARTnews, February, p. 94.
Peterson, Diane, "Feast Your Eyes on the 'Light' Exhibit," The Press Democrat, January
21, p. 14.
1993 Runbeck, Kathryn, "Regional Loyalty and Pride," Art of California, June.
Tanner, Marcia, "Contemporary Landscapes Bask in Local Gallery Spotlight," San
Francisco Chronicle, May 12, pp. 8 (Z-1).
"Another Perspective," Diablo Arts, March-May.
1992 "Contemporary Landscape Painting," Artweek, September 3.
1991 Shere, Charles, Terry St. John, Contemporary Realist Gallery, San Francisco, CA.

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- 1990 Hale, David, "Terry St. John's Brilliant Landscapes," The Fresno Bee, October 14.
Hale, David, "Fall Preview," The Fresno Bee, September 9.
Harrison, Helen A., "The Pacific View Lives on Happily," New York Times, July 22.
- 1989 Coran, James L. and Walter A. Nelson-Rees, If Pictures Could Talk, WIM, Oakland, CA.
- 1984 "Sheldon Opens Season," The Lincoln Journal-Star, September 2.
- 1982 Fowler, Carol, "Terry St. John's Painterly Response," Contra Costa Times, July 12.
- 1975 Albright, Thomas, Paying Homage to Bay Area Tradition, San Francisco Chronicle.
Albright, Thomas, "Review," San Francisco Chronicle, February.
Shere, Charles, "Rare Showing of Terry St. Johns," Oakland Tribune, February 12.
- 1973 Albright, Thomas, "Off-Beat Art From the East Bay," San Francisco Chronicle.
- 1972 Albright, Thomas, "A Strong Quartet of Art," San Francisco Chronicle.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 1991–93 Artist-in-Residence at Yosemite National Park, CA
- 1990–98 Chairperson of the Art Department at Notre Dame de Namur University at Belmont, CA
- 1990 Visiting Professor at Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA
- 1979–91 Director, Outdoor Painters Project at University of California, Santa Cruz, CA
- 1969–90 Associate Curator of Modern Painting at Oakland Museum of California, Oakland, CA

AWARDS

- 1965 Honorable Mention, James D. Phelan Award

COLLECTIONS

- de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco Museum of Fine Arts, San Francisco, CA
- Oakland Museum of California, Oakland, CA
- San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose, CA
- Masur Museum, Monroe, LA
- City of San Francisco, San Francisco, CA
- Mills College, Oakland, CA
- Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, CA