

WIDE-ANGLE PAINTING

JOERG DRESSLER IN PROVINCETOWN



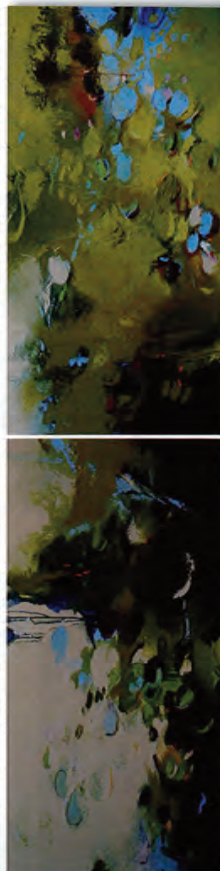
"Joerg Dressler: Panoramas"
Alden Gallery
423 Commercial Street
Provincetown, Massachusetts

Like the extraordinary Hans Hofmann before him — also a native of Germany who fell in love with the very terminus of Cape Cod and painted there with devotion — Joerg Dressler is deeply attracted to Provincetown.

August 13 through 26

Known as America's oldest art colony, the site has long attracted remarkable artists, notably, Hofmann and his many students. Dressler arrived in 1996, exactly 30 years following Hofmann's death. The "summer place by the sea and a world away" from Munich, Paris and New York (as James Joyce, who represents the Hofmann estate, has described the town) again strangely resonates with Dressler. His tangible affinity for Provincetown serves as a foil for his own biographical filiations with Hamburg, or Paris, or Boston.

If Provincetown is Dressler's personal and artistic mooring, it is especially the meeting of ocean and sky that pulls him in, much as it propels his art. The horizon is the main subject of "Panoramas," his first presentation of a body of works exclusively in this immersive, wide-angle format. Whether triptychs or even "pantychs" (five elements), Dressler's multi-panel paintings position viewers alongside the artist to scan the natural and built environment. He suggests the horizon is a limit in terms of space, a kind of ever-mobile seam,



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"You owe it to yourself to see how far you can get with the right representation."

For Dressler, who is also an avid bicyclist, physical and psychological passage through time is conjured by looking left and right at the moving landscape/seascape, as he comments, "Although my paintings start out as mental snapshots, they are more than mere depictions of a singular moment. They are a conglomeration of various episodes: a distant memory, a recent plan, a subconscious impression of a millisecond — all coming together in the anticipation of something new."



unleashes Dressler's gestural, painting in strong yellow-green/red-violet hues along with creamy yellows.

Dressler was born in Hanau, Germany, the town of the Brothers Grimm. Their dark-spirited forest tales certainly would have impressed any child. As a young adult he engaged with Claude Lévi-Strauss' study of myths. These experiences combine to underscore the value of balancing positive and negative forces that Dressler translates into artistic terms. Still, he prods himself to uncover

In Dressler's paintings, horizons seem to multiply, and the proportion of sky to land is constantly readjusted, as is the coloration of elements.

"Like the parallel and overlapping experiences of psychological time, new layers of paint cover previous ones, while older layers remain relevant," he said.

In carefully constructed works, Dressler uses a palette knife. He scratches at the surface with the back of the knife, and allows drips of paint and bare canvas areas to participate, along with imprints from other materials. His work engages us to move from relatively unobstructed views through the felt presence of the built environment. While a cool, blue/green emphasis is a favored palette, in each of the square components that comprise his panoramic views, Dressler also creates graphic structures of balance that function top to bottom, left to right. What might be rigid is made dynamic, as he experiments with bold cadmium streaks or other devices that push him to discover new modes of imaging without losing himself.

Among the panoramas shown is a triptych from Dressler's "Water's Edge" series, a painterly painting providing the new vantage point of looking down, as if beneath the horizon, at floating water lilies. Claude Monet is, of course, referenced in this work that opens up to luscious surface incident and



OPPOSITE PAGE TOP TO BOTTOM: PANORAMA I, ABCZ.
Water's Edge XI, AB (detail).
THIS PAGE TOP TO BOTTOM: PANORAMA II, ABC.
Panorama IV, ABC.

new continuities in art, as in life. He keeps a Bavarian sign above the door in his studio, reminding him, knowingly, "All lies within God's blessing."

Judith Tolnick Champa
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