

SHARON HORVATH

Peaceable

From April 25 through May 26, The Drawing Room in East Hampton will present recent paintings on paper and canvas by New York artist Sharon Horvath. In this new work, Horvath is in full command of the distinctive fluid line with which she weaves rich visual narratives that explore interior and exterior, public and private spaces. Whether inspired by ancient beds, baseball fields, dunes by the sea, or the starry night sky, Horvath mines her palette of pure pigment and invented imagery to construct the theatrical compositions in her mind.

Horvath's interest in ancient beds arose while she was living in Rome as a recipient of the Rome Prize in painting in 1996. Since then her study of the bed in history has led her from early Roman stone benches to four-poster Victorian versions to canopies. She sees the empty bed as a shaped, reversible environment: a refuge or a dazzling universe.

For her paintings on canvas, Horvath mixes acrylic and dispersed pigments in an array of brilliant colors that shimmer with dappled highlights, evoking a sense of wonder. Surrounding inviting lakes of color, her woven structures introduce an inventive and painterly topography and create quirky imagery rich in metaphor. In a pair of small paintings, *Split* and *Split It*, Horvath divides each canvas between the baseball field and the bed. The juxtaposition of these elements suggests a playful dialogue between rest and play, as one physically mirrors the other. Horvath explores the bed metaphor further in a 6 x 6 foot painting titled, *Monument*, where deep space and netted fields of color converge with a curvaceous architectural bed frame in a rich celebration of pattern.

In her paintings on paper, Horvath uses ink and dispersed pigments with a meandering gesture of her thin brush to create visionary landscapes. In a series that speaks to our human experience of the natural world, the closely cropped structures of Horvath's colorful canvases give way to majestic vistas of mountainous sand dunes and rolling waves. Using a palette restricted to turquoise with contrasting accents, Horvath stretches a graceful dune silhouette across two canvases in a diptych titled, *Elemental Drift #1*. The open background of the blush-stained page enhances a sense of temporal and physical passage through an expansive landscape where sand drifts meet the sea.

References to the human presence are amplified in several works dedicated to the American Primitive painter Edward Hicks (1780-1849), whose utopian *Peaceable Kingdom* paintings provide a fresh context for Horvath's hand and mind to wonder. Seizing as a point of departure the Quaker preacher's depictions of a world in which "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid," Horvath spins layers of interlaced lines to form a contemporary evolution of his 19th century vision.

Together, these paintings on canvas and paper describe a fanciful place where joy coexists with the unknown, and the path to discovery is paramount to their making.

Sharon Horvath lives and works in New York City and is an Associate Professor at Purchase College, SUNY. She has received numerous awards including, in 2005, an Anonymous Was a Woman Grant, in 2004, the Edwin Palmer Memorial Prize for Painting from the National Academy Museum, a Pollock-Krasner Foundation grant for Painting in 1994 and 1997, and the Rome Prize, Fellowship in Painting from the American Academy in Rome in 1996. Horvath won a Richard and Hinda

Rosenthal Foundation Award for a painter under 35 years of age at the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1993 and a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship for Painting in 1992.

Gallery hours: Monday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday 11 to 5; Sunday 11 to 4

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