

ROBERT HARMS

new paintings

January 12 – March 3, 2013



Snowfall, 2012, oil on linen, 20 x 16 inches

The Drawing Room in East Hampton is pleased to present the gallery's third exhibition of abstract oil paintings by longtime East End resident, Robert Harms, opening January 12, 2013.

The Southampton studio that Robert Harms calls home is nestled among bucolic woodlands, expanses of undulating foliage and broad, mutable skies. Overlooking a quiet body of water called Little Fresh Pond, it is here among the compositions of the natural world that for the past nine years the artist has found his muse. Harms' engagement with the environment is both intensely observational and intuitive. Through his vision weather, the movement of branches and buds, and sparkling reflections are translated into pictorial expanses of gesture, color, and lilting form. Hundreds of lines swirl across the white canvas, rippling and weaving as if through a thicket of delicate brambles. Dappled with sunlight, or soft afternoon shade, Harms' brushstrokes and broader washes of translucent color act as a touchstone, inviting the viewer for refuge and reverie in fields of dimensional abstract space.

Inspired by the seasonal changes at Little Fresh Pond, Harms belongs to a lineage of artists deeply engaged in the natural world – from Monet's rapt attention to the surface of his pond at Giverny and Joan Mitchell's response to views of the Seine that surrounded her studio in the nearby French town of Vétheuil, to Marin's odes to the Maine coastline. Yet Harms imbues his experience of nature on canvas with a different energy and touch. Attuned to the atmosphere surrounding his pond, and seeking a responsive painterly gesture, he preserves the white canvas surface on all sides of the central field of action, allowing space for the dance of his descriptive brushwork. In a crisp suite of small paintings titled variously *Snowfall*, *Reflection*, *Morning Lilies* and *A Day in June*, Harms explores a broad spectrum of light and color with bravado. Three larger paintings - *After Winter*, *Mimosa* and *Yellow Winter* (each 42 x 38 inches) - reveal the broader arc of his arm sweeping across the pristine white expanse, articulating an abstract calligraphic text that mirrors the pond's surface.

"Nature seen, nature felt – more caressed by light and brush than tightly described, making adequate space for our eyes to bob and float on the visual depth of the surface."

-- Klaus Kertess, author and curator

As Kertess articulates, Harms captures a gentle balance of fleeting and robust experiences of nature. Working on various scales from the diminutive to large-scale oil paintings up to 5 feet wide, each painterly venture involves an extended, deliberate process that is profoundly informed by the artist's interest in stretching the formal properties of his medium. Through his commitment to abstraction and the physicality of oil paint, Harms has achieved a personal vocabulary of mark-making that evokes, succinctly, powerful visual equivalents for places and sensations mysteriously familiar.

Robert Harms studied at The School of Visual Arts in New York City and the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine. He is the recipient of awards from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, and the National Arts Club, and his work is in the permanent collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Parrish Art Museum and Guild Hall Museum.

Winter hours: Monday, Thursday, Friday & Saturday 10–5; Sunday 11-5

For further information & images, please contact Janet Goleas at 631.324.5016 or info@drawingroom-gallery.com