

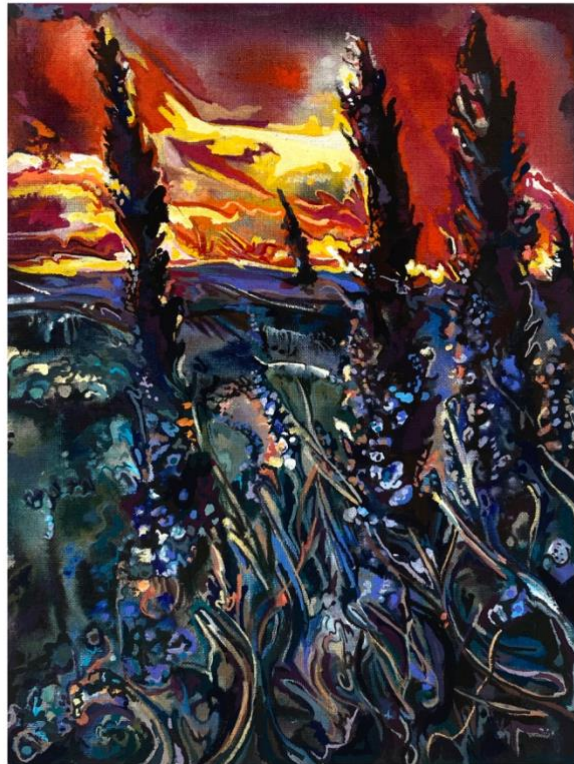
HEROES GALLERY

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Maria Calandra: Elizabeth Murray

November 4th – December 18th, 2021
Opening Thursday, November 4th, 6pm – 9pm

Heroes Gallery is pleased to present new work by contemporary artist Maria Calandra placed in conversation with works by Elizabeth Murray from the early 1990s. Calandra has long been inspired by the vibrant palette and energy-infused gestural style of Murray whom she considers to be a forebearer.



Roberta Smith's 2007 New York Times obituary for Murray describes each painting as a "swirling vortex." Defined as a spinning mass of air or liquid that pulls things into its center, a vortex is a cause of destruction, a source of energy and an inescapable force of nature. Indeed, Murray's vortexes consumed seemingly mundane objects from her daily life; tables, chairs, cups, jagged shapes, lines and punctuation marks and spat them back out, charged with energy and indifferent to expectations surrounding women and abstraction at the time.

Calandra's paintings similarly engage a unique energy, not the all-consuming vortex but rather the invisible vibrations that emanate from the spaces she moves through. An avid hiker, Calandra documents her experiences by highlighting the intimate, often indescribable, relationship between a person and the natural environment. She records her experiences by drawing the repeating lines and colors in reflected water, ancient rocks and twisted tree trunks, rendering nature as a form of meditation. By employing this method of automatic painting, Calandra creates the unique line quality and color palette she has become known for, where marks are layered intuitively, working back and forth between lights and darks until space begins to emerge. The resulting works thus become transcriptions of the unfurling energies that lie within our (dying) earth, like music notes on a page.

Calandra sees her work as articulating an idea of a place rather than realistically documenting one. Though she uses an initial photography to begin each painting, she often discards it so that tactile experience and changing light are more intuitively expressed through memory. Each work embodies the tension created between what is observed and what is remembered. The resulting image parallels a

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scene from a theatrical play more than a photograph by representing multiple moments in time and states of being. The creation of each painting becomes a form of map-making.

These small paintings are jewel boxes – containers for the vibrations, power, and spirit of a place and in turn, of the artist's experience there. Both Calandra and Murray revel in a drama and hyperreality where the layering of lines, shapes, colors, and in Murray's case, physical canvases, captures energy and creates an agitated abstract field. Within this field, both artists express great beauty by referencing their own lives and experiences while leaving space open for the viewer's own interpretation and engagement.

Maria Calandra (b. London, England) is an artist based in Brooklyn, NY. She received an MFA in Painting from Cornell University in 2006 and a BFA in Painting from Ohio University in 1999. She has had solo exhibitions at Steve Turner Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2021), Sardine Gallery, Brooklyn, NY (2015) and Sierra Nevada College, Incline Village, NV (2014). Group exhibitions include Essex Flowers, NY, Klaus von Nichtssagend Gallery, NY, Andrew Edlin Gallery, NY, Shrine Gallery, NY, Geoffrey Young Gallery, MA, Freight and Volume, NY, White Columns, NY and Shoot the Lobster/Martos Gallery, NY. She has been reviewed and written about in Time Out New York, The Washington Post, The New York Sun and The New York Times and featured in Maake Magazine, FUKT Magazine based in Berlin, and ArtMaze Magazine. Maria is the artist and writer behind the online project Pencil in the Studio, where she visits with artists for the day and draws their studio and artworks.

Image: Maria Calandra, *Sunset Outside of Arezzo*, 2021, acrylic on linen, 10 x 8 inches