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Andy Mister: 'Snowing Sun'
The Transformative Powers of Nature
Lowell Ryan Projects
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by Jody Zellen



Andy Mister is an artist and writer currently living in Beacon, New York. He holds a BA in English literature and philosophy and an MFA in creative writing. Though art and writing are separate disciplines, his literary background has influenced the way he approaches creating visual art. He has published two books; *Liner Notes* (2013), a lyric essay and *Heroes & Villains* (2015), a book of drawings of historical and cultural figures who have been identified as both heroes and villains. According to his artist's statement, his work investigates the boundary between mechanical and manual reproduction. He is interested in how meaning is created or lost through copying, a way of working akin to appropriationist strategies. While in past series, Mister reproduced charged imagery culled from current or historic events— crowds, protests, burning cars and buildings— in his latest works, he recreates images of flowers, mountains, and crashing waves that reflect the allure and power of nature. The twelve works— four seascapes, three mountains from Nepal and five images of flowers cropped within oval frames— depict different aspects of the natural world.

These large-scale photorealistic works combine drawing and painting. He begins with “found” images that are scanned and altered and cropped using Photoshop. He then reproduces these photographs by hand with exacting detail on large sheets of paper covered with lightly colored acrylic washes and subtle gradients. He uses a carbon pencil and charcoal to delineate the texture and details of his subjects. The paper is mounted to panel when finished, giving the drawings a physical presence.

As in past exhibitions, the show's title is taken from song lyrics. In this instance, *Snowing Sun* is by the Italian band, Bellini. The title directs the interpretation of the work away from “reality” into a more poetic realm. The images are less about the place or the story and more about the translation by hand from photograph to drawing, and how audiences interpret that process, rather than the original context of the source image. *Nepal 2* (all works 2022) is an exquisite drawing of the top of a snow-covered mountain peak with jagged edges jutting into the sky.

The lower portion of the composition is in shadow and drawn as a solid black shape that contrasts with the nuanced tones of the rest of the image. The sky is lightly textured suggesting a haze or the approach of a storm, although there are no clouds. Rather than present the scene in full color or in black and white, Mister draws this mountain in black and white against a light pink ground. *Nepal 1* and *Nepal 3* also depict mountain peaks against white and light blue backgrounds. Across the wall from the mountains are drawings of ocean waves all titled *An Invisible Terrain* (1-4), most likely named after the book, *Invisible Terrain: John Ashbery and the*

Aesthetics of Nature, where Ashbery questions how “nature, not art might usurp the canvas.” In Mister’s images, crashing waves are juxtaposed with cloud-filled skies drawn in detailed black and white against colorful gradients that come across as more surreal than identifiable.

Upstairs, Mister installs five modest-size oval panels, each presenting a different grouping of realistically rendered flowers in situ against subtle gradients that transition from orange to blue in *Depending on the Weather* and from purple to green in *Underwater Moonlight*. These beautiful and seductive works take the viewer away from the gallery into the natural world, where they can not only marvel at Mister’s technical skills, but also in the transformative powers of nature.

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