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Jacci Den Hartog: "Come and Show Me The Way" at Rosamund Felsen Gallery
by jody zellen



In The Middle of Nowhere, 2011, Acrylic on paper and hydrocal with steel mesh, on powder coated aluminum table
35" x 26" x 20", Photo: Grant Mudford, courtesy Rosamund Felsen Gallery

Jacci Den Hartog traces the line between past and present in her recent show titled "Come and Show Me The Way." Landscape has always been her core subject, whether land or water, real or imagined. Den Hartog has transitioned from three-dimensional sculptures cascading from the wall reminiscent of flowing water to mountainous forms emerging from flat tables, both with brightly painted contour lines. Each of the new pieces is titled after a Dusty Springfield song. Springfield was a soul singer in the 1950s and '60s whose lyrics dealt with memory, love and loss. The titles direct the interpretation of the work, which fuse abstraction patterning with personal history; be it Den Hartog's mother's decline from Alzheimer's or the Navajo rugs from her childhood.

A path through each piece is a line that first moves along the horizontal plane before ascending a sculpted mountain only to descend on the other side. Traversing the landscapes depicted and hypothetically traveling along these striations of color becomes a journey that ebbs and flows. They can be seen as journeys through the language of painting, journeys through a fabricated landscape, as well as journeys through the artist's own history. *Stay Awhile With Me* (2012) is a vibrant red and yellow piece. An organically shaped reddish mound with alternating light and dark maroon stripes rises from a flat yellow surface. Situated upon white powder-coated aluminum legs, the horizontal plane becomes a tabletop. Coupled with this sculptural element is a wall-mounted acrylic-on-paper painting. In it, two painted triangular shaped mountains appear to be in conversation with the sculptural form. The curves of the sculpture are contrasted with the angles of the triangles. *In the Middle of Nowhere* (2011) presents two mountainous forms that rise from a horizontal painting amid a multicolor array of concentric diamond shapes. The work accentuates the feeling of being lost in a succession of stripes that ascend from the ground skyward.

There are multiple points of entry in each of these striking and mesmerizing works, as it is possible to follow a line of color from beginning to end. While the works allude to the physical world, they are not grounded in reality. Each piece can be thought of as a self-contained landscape with its own map and song, that offers multiple journeys some with brightly colored ups and somber downs, or with the opposite, that parallel a multifaceted journey though life.