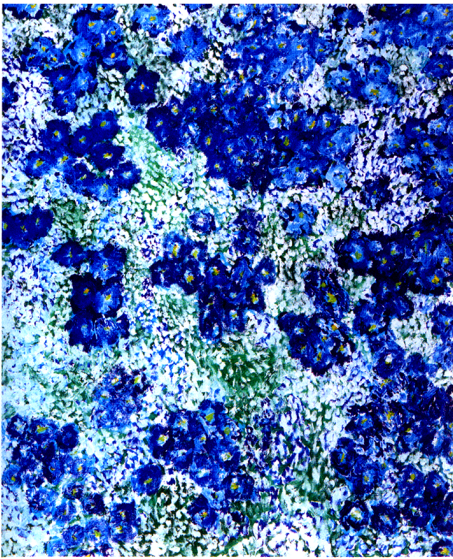


Art Ltd.
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"SNOW CRACKING UNDERFOOT," 2017
Matthew Chambers
OIL AND ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 61" X 49"
PHOTO: LEE THOMPSON
COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND PRAZ-DELAVALLE

LOS ANGELES

Matthew Chambers: "Montana Wildflowers as I Imagine I'll See in the Spring" at Praz-Delavallade

Eight months before the opening of his exhibition, Matthew Chambers moved from Los Angeles to Montana and experienced winter snows that blanketed the landscape. "The softened shapes, muted palette, and absolute stillness of the winter," Chambers notes, "create a hypothetical landscape that changes with every storm." From his studio he imagined what the landscape would look like in spring and approached his canvases as if "they were the snow draped mountains outside [his] window." Although snow has its nuances, Chambers sought to brighten the winter landscape through the creation of fields of flowers. The titles of the paintings reinforce this transformation, for example in *Spread Across What Was Previously Bleak* (all works 2017, and all but one are 61-by-49 inches), Chambers creates a field of red gestural brushstrokes atop a vivid green ground suggesting the blossoming of flowers sprouting in a sea of grass. Using oil and acrylic and painting in an abstractly expressive style, Chambers converts the stillness of winter into colorful arrays of invented flowers. Rather than focus on the minute details of each leaf and petal, he presents them *en masse* as if growing wildly over the hills and mountainsides.

As in previous bodies of work, Chambers' motivation is to captivate the viewer and surround them with an image of beauty. The

paintings are meditative and open-ended. Not overtly concerned with specificity, Chambers delights in the imaginative possibilities of what the landscape will reveal after the snow melts and rather than portray the wintery connotations his titles suggest, he invents what might be *Hiding Below A Windy Shoulder*—a landscape filled with overlapping, multicolored wild plants or as in *Snow Cracking Underfoot*, he looks down, replacing the cracking snow underfoot with delicate blue buds surrounding yellow centers mingling with white fluttering leaves all painted with short choppy impressionistic brushstrokes.

As his titles suggest, Chambers sees the burgeoning spring from all perspectives and points of view. He paints his flowers from above as well as from a distanced vantage point so as to give a panoramic view of his imagined landscape. The enigma in the exhibition is the painting *Self Portrait As A St. Bernard (worried)*, in which Chambers casually paints himself in three-quarter view as a wide-eyed, panting St. Bernard. It seems evident that if Chambers were a dog he would roll with pleasure in the colors of his creation.

—JODY ZELLEN