

Dina Scoppettone on New Work by John Maxon

In the course of appreciating paintings by John Maxon, there is a persistent sense that the composition came to the canvas by way of the edge, and washed through it as if it were a waterfall enlivening the face of a mountain. This aspect of Maxon's work may be observed rather explicitly through the range of his Architectural, Narrative and Abstract paintings, such as Breakthrough, Rush, Riverbend, Revisitation, and Full Moon. As a place to begin, the edge is excellent in terms of keeping things contemporary and interesting. Ultimately, Maxon's new work invites the viewer across the canvas on a journey through a personal and collective index of codes triggered by color, commotion, signs and signifiers. There is something here for everyone.

Steeped in plein air painting, Maxon's roots are in the field, fed by sunlight. His eyes are calibrated to see color in the context of bright light. Maxon's new work makes no mention of "landscape" yet he brings the most essential aspects of the earth, its gardens, rolling hills, pathways and sky into every painting.

"Architectural" motifs are celebrated mostly as vehicles for bold and bright swathes of color, filled in as roof, exterior wall, vine hedge, or line of Cyprus. The possibility for architectural to bleed through Maxon's palette of colors is there in the fullness of the color, in the solid quality that Maxon's blocks of color establish across the foreground and sky, or at all four corners. With these architectural motifs the viewer gets one part landscape, one part abstraction and one part unapologetic color.

As a deeply intuitive colorist, Maxon explores an edgy but delicate combination of color that is at once wild and harmonious. Maxon's "Narrative" paintings invoke vignettes of orange sunsets over coastal pastures and clear blue streams, as in Mystic River; or an echo of the sea and the ancient turning of its waters by way of a perfect spiral seashell centered on pink and golden sand about to be lapped away by the frothy blue green waves, as in Raindrops. Obvious and unfathomed scenes such as these unfold like the exotic and familiar flowers that appear suddenly in Maxon's narrative abstractions. Perfect white roses, orchids on the branch, blushy amaryllis, and dreamy datura trumpet blossoms, are, along side exquisitely painted birds, the most recognizable and refined elements within Maxon's compositions, but they are used sparingly, perhaps as pointers to what's opening, what's landed as a miracle in the midst of abstraction.

Maxon's paintings come to life with every passing brush of color onto the canvas, propelled by a personal dialogue that likely puts a degree of play into the process. Ultimately, Maxon's sense of direction comes from a well spring within which seems to flow directly through the paint brush, manifesting across large sized canvases as rich splashes of jasmine blossom, sparkling white light, and falling water.

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