
Standing Still

Mishael Coggeshall-Burr | Wilhelm Neusser

April 26 – May 28, 2023

Abigail Ogilvy Gallery is proud to present *Standing Still*, a two-person exhibition featuring the artwork of Mishael Coggeshall-Burr and Wilhelm Neusser. Coggeshall-Burr and Neusser use painterly techniques to capture a strong sense of place and time that tie particularly to memory; memories the artists themselves have connected to these landscapes, and ones they aim to evoke in their viewers. Neusser's serene evening skies and Coggeshall-Burr's blurred cityscape compositions present an opportunity to slow down and focus on the here and now.

Mishael Coggeshall-Burr integrates photography and oil painting to create novel and compelling images on canvas. Taking blurred shots with a 35mm camera, the artist captures memories often collected when he travels. The resulting images offer a distant yet immersive perception of places that are significant to him. The series on view includes imagery from very different stages in his life: Paris, Budapest, and Ukraine. In his Parisian scenes, the attention is on movement: the tension of starting a journey and being seduced by the unknown, by the way our eyes catch light when our bodies explore a new setting. His more recent works draw from his trips to Ukraine during the ongoing conflict with Russia. Coggeshall-Burr has been deeply involved in contributing to refugee aid with his wife Nadya, who started a non-profit in 2022. Offering complex but hopeful images, these layered memories mimic that desire to pause and slow down when the world keeps revolving around you, even when standing still. Coggeshall-Burr's two most recent works feature the proud Franz Joseph - now "Freedom" bridge; trolley rails and bridge iron glowing a rainbow in the late light, a crisscross of golden clouds, streetlamps just about to light. He reflects: "Nadya and I spent a few days exploring Budapest in November before she continued on to Ukraine for her Project Nadiya work, I back to children (and day job). The bridge was near our apartment, an art deco lattice of old cast iron and green paint, in the evenings teenagers collected from nearby universities, snapping selfies and jostling. It's hard to put it into words, but this bridge felt like a kind of energy center for this area of the city, a magnet for youth, some kind of magic in it."

Wilhelm Neusser is a contemporary painter, known for his strikingly moody landscapes, rich in texture. In his newest series of *Starry Nights*, Neusser takes a familiar motif often used in his cranberry paintings and recalibrates the technique: paint drips morph from bright red cranberries to bright white stars set against a dark sky. Neusser thinks of this technique as central to his painterly language, and in a recent studio visit noted: "I'm simply using similar words to create different poems." The technique itself of splattering paint on his finished canvas is somewhat random, an irony in the relationship humans have long had with constellations, their meaning and their seemingly fixed place in relation to the Earth. The serenity of these resulting scenes offers us a chance to stand still under these changing skies. Contrasting the deep blues and purples of the *Starry Night* series are Neusser's *Marshes*, fiery red and orange landscapes that aim to push the romantic landscape towards a somewhat apocalyptic and anxious atmosphere. As with many of his landscapes, they are a memory of place and time - a dramatic scene Neusser recalls from his commute home from Montserrat during a teaching semester. For Neusser, "A landscape painting is a metaphorical space that invites the eye and mind to wander and wonder, and for the viewer to project."

Building layered compositions, Mishael Coggeshall-Burr's and Wilhelm Neusser's paintings draw from memories and feelings summoned by different places and moments in their lives. In Neusser's worlds, scenes are presented with a meticulous precision, creating a distance from the viewer. As a result, the landscape appears magnified, hyperrealist; like a flashbulb memory that directs the spotlight to reveal what gets our attention over what goes unnoticed. On the contrary, Coggeshall-Burr conceives blurred, vague memories, as if we were seeing them in the process of being forgotten. The resulting artworks immerse the viewer in these places, even when they may be unknown for them. The artists capture the images that lay on our eyelids right before we blink and the dichotomy of feeling all at once distant yet close by. Together, the artists start a dialogue that questions our relationship with landscape and its ability to engage us in a moment of recollection.

Mishael Coggeshall-Burr studied painting at Middlebury College, The Glasgow School of Art, and the Art Students League in New York. His artistic adventures have led him to many countries and continents, including China, Tibet and Nepal, where he garnered images for a show in Kazakhstan; London, UK, where he made his own art and installed a variety of artwork

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at the Tate Galleries for several years; Mozambique, where he met his amazing yogini wife Nadya; Germany, France, Hong Kong and Macao, as well as Central America and the Caribbean, with many images from his travels featured in his art exhibitions. He lives, works and paints in Montague, MA with his wife and four children.

Wilhelm Neusser was born in Cologne, Germany. From 1997 to 2001 he studied at the Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Karlsruhe with Professors Gerd van Dülmen und Harald Klingelhöller. He was also a guest student in art history and theory at the Hochschule für Gestaltung Karlsruhe with Professors Hans Belting und Siegfried Gohr. After his studies, Neusser lived and worked in Cologne until his relocation to the United States in 2011. His recent museum exhibitions include the Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam, 2019), the Fruitlands Museum (Harvard, MA, 2019), and MASS MoCa (North Adams, MA, 2018). In 2020 and 2022 he was honored with a finalist grant in Painting from the Mass Cultural Council. Neusser's work has been included in notable publications, including The Boston Globe, Boston Magazine, Artscope Magazine, Boston.com, and Big Red & Shiny. He lives and works in Somerville, MA.

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