



Jan Dilenschneider
Sublimer la nature

"We can never have enough of nature!"

H.D. Thoreau

GALERIE PIERRE-ALAIN CHALLIER

From July, 5 to 28 2018



Watery Marshes, 30 x 40 inches, Oil on canvas.

Daring to be brutal and to be transported by our work

By Louis Benech, landscape designer

What I like about Jan Dilenschneider's paintings is the power of her lines and the support of the material. They portray the contradiction between nature's true fragility and our unswerving tendency to believe that it is eternal – in all our conscious unconsciousness. The splendor of the landscapes, and the leaves and flowers that inhabit them, is indicative of their ephemeral, fragile nature. One must produce an almighty roar – which we tend to forget – to make a plea before the smoke issuing from the ruins dies down forever. I personally do not appreciate softness – like Jan Dilenschneider we must dare to be brutal and to be transported by our work when creating.

Once upon a time in July...

By Pierre-Alain Challier, gallery owner



© François Rousseau

When I first exhibited Jan Dilenschneider's paintings, they met with immediate success. Ever since then, like a lucky date, the American artist has met with collectors in Paris in July, eschewing the customs and expectations of contemporary art.

Classically trained in oil on canvas, Jan Dilenschneider became a master of emotions and movement in the wake of the devastation wreaked by Hurricane Sandy in 2012, an event which profoundly influenced her by opening up the prospect of abstraction as a means of catharsis. Her style suddenly became more spirited, teetering between representation of the real and abstraction, ultimately drawing us together.

We were united by our intense love for nature. Numerous artists with a deep-rooted connection to this theme are represented in my Le Marais gallery. Following on from this, that same year I began the restoration of Lascours, a dream location and hidden jewel slumbering in the South of France amid botanical grounds cultivated since the 18th century, a fitting setting in which to exhibit life-size art in a few years time. Jan immediately decided to paint this landscape, with its tall grassy fields, and gave me the painting.

Jan Dilenschneider is a very involved artist. She throws herself headlong into the painting, revealing the life force of the water and wind, highlighting the beauty of the world and the need to preserve its landscapes. One can sense this intense energy in the depth of her canvases. Over the course of our conversations, Jan began to let go of the figurative and I am delighted to accompany her in this development. She is reconnecting with the great tradition of Franco-American ties that has existed since the time of the Impressionists.

Should we see her as the spiritual heir to a pantheon of artists bordering on abstraction, dominated by Georgia O'Keeffe and Joan Mitchell? This exhibition, "Sublimer la Nature", which hints at writer Henry David Thoreau's "We can never have enough of nature!", marks Jan Dilenschneider's fourth exhibition at the gallery, which is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year. She highlights the deep-rooted ties that connect me to the variety of artists whom I am lucky enough to represent.

An expressionist artist with a love for the impressionist palette



You presented your work for the first time in 2013, in Paris. Why did you wait so long to exhibit your work for the first time?

For a long while, I hadn't ever thought of selling my paintings, until a couple suggested it to me when they expressed an interest in some pieces of work displayed in my home. I was taken aback, but I agreed. When they left and took my paintings with them, I was horrified! They had taken away my babies! But I moved on, and Pierre-Alain Challier offered me my first exhibition at his gallery in Paris. It's really him who launched my public career. I now exhibit a lot at small museums and universities in the United States, but I still love Paris and that's why I am so happy to go back there.

Take us to your studio on Long Island – a spectacular place – and describe it to us.

When I push open the doors – which are Palladian in style with a fanlight – to my balcony, I always feel a rush of inspiration, just like the one I feel before I start to paint. On beautiful early spring days, when the new grass is blue-green and the young leaves on the trees are almost yellow, they form a stark contrast against the azure sky. The more you raise your gaze, the deeper blue the sky becomes. It reflects the calm waters. A hundred-and-twenty-year-old pavilion by the water's edge gives me a magnificent setting in which to paint in the shade or to receive friends. Century-old trees cast ever fascinating shadows onto the lawn. However my studio is a pale gray, neutral space that doesn't interfere with the shades of my paintings.

How do you work? Do you use photographs?

As an expressionist, when I work I follow my inspiration, which I draw from my surroundings. I often take photos with my phone while driving – I stop the car on the side of the road – or while walking, whenever I feel the need. I never produce an exact copy of the image before me; I observe it closely, and then put it to one side to paint what I feel. Picasso once said: “Let the painting guide you.” My instincts form the basis for my creative process, which I think makes the results more personal.

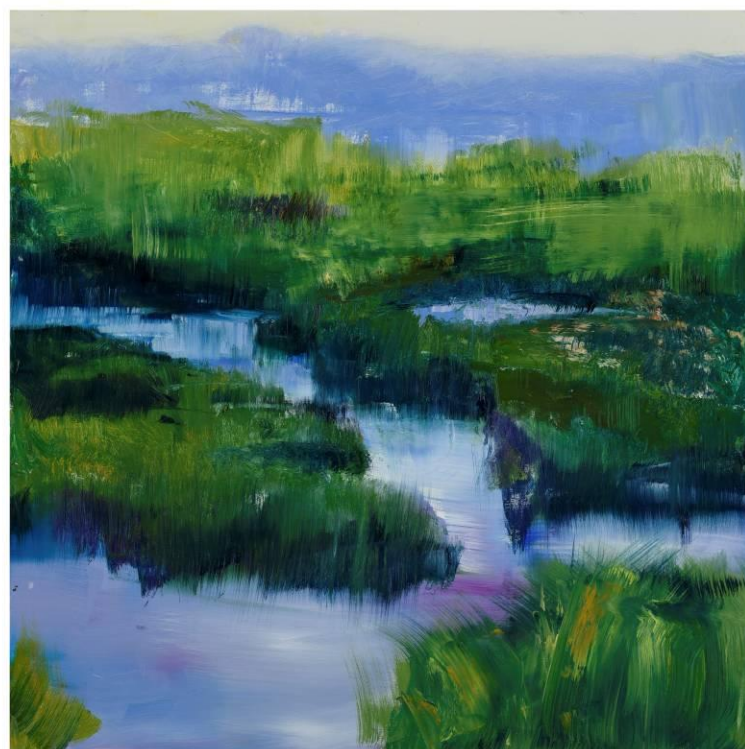
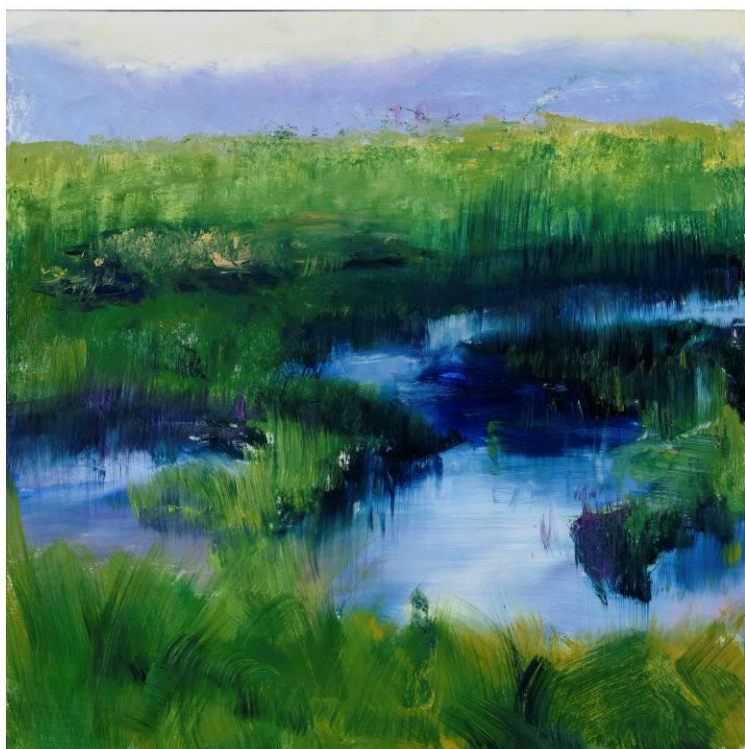
You have developed an original working method based on diptychs and now triptychs. What do you gain from dividing up the image in this way?

I produce diptychs for one very simple reason: I love painting on a large scale. I often say that I paint with my entire arm and not just my hand. So my canvases can sometimes become too large for some people’s homes. I like to call my diptychs “pairs”, which can be bought together or

separately as each half is a work in its own right. These days, families often move home. Two paintings hung together above a sofa can be placed on either side of the fireplace in the next house. So by painting collections of two or three paintings, collectors can install them however they wish at home. Of the 21 pairs that I have sold, 20 were bought together.

Sometimes your colors are subdued, other times they are vivid. Can you explain your relationship with color to us?

I think that it is important for the color to “sing”. Sometimes it is nice to simply let it “whisper”. When wanting to produce this effect, I use similar shades that blend easily. But I am really passionate about using vibrant colors and strong contrasts. That is what I call “singing”. These shades transform one another. For example, a bright, pale yellow completely changes when placed next to a dark blue or a beige. Ultimately the most important thing is to balance the colors on the canvas. I always say that in painting, color is joy and the gestures are passion.



Wandering Waters #1 and #2, a diptych, 30 x 30 inches, Oil on canvas

The triumph of Nature and the power of Painting

For her fourth exhibition at Galerie Pierre-Alain Challier, Jan Dilenschneider draws on her powerful passion for painting to reassert her determination to preserve the beauty of nature. Her life's work is to inspire love for the planet.

"If words could say everything, we would have no need for artists" summarizes Jan Dilenschneider in her remote studio. "I paint to share my emotions when confronted with the splendor of nature – that is my message. I want my audience to fall in love with nature once again; I want to establish a dialog with them that will lead them to share in the feeling that beauty will save the world." Her ambitions extend beyond the scope of a mere artistic project. "The purpose of my work is to encourage people to protect the beauty of our planet by directing attention to the dangers that threaten it, without guilt-tripping the people viewing my paintings. By looking at them thoughtfully, one can grasp both the fragility of nature and its power. Painting has the power to convey this understanding of the world."

Perhaps that is why the American artist depicts virgin landscapes unmarked by the presence of human figures. The long perspectives of large stretches open up a realm of possibilities: the mysteries of vegetation, imagination, and the freedom to daydream. It is simply impossible for her to remain impassive when confronted the threat of ecological catastrophe. Her sensibility is constantly alert; her emotions dictate her motions and her choice of colors. She is convinced that it is her duty to take action: "Artists have an important responsibility to raise public awareness with regards to the challenges currently facing our society," she confides. But this call to action isn't unique to her; the American artist created The Janet Hennessey Dilenschneider Scholar Rescue Award in 2014 to help creators and their families in countries where political instability endangers their freedom of expression. She considers engagement to be of vital importance.

A piece of paradise to represent the entire planet

While the artist enhances nature and divides it into diptychs and triptychs, the titles of her works are quite simple, transparent and without real poetic effect. Instead they are rather descriptive in nature: *grassy banks*, *golden atmosphere*, *homage to the leaves*, *dancing waters*, etc. The landscapes are drawn from her everyday surroundings on the shores of long island sound, where colonies of artists emerged in the 20th century, like Silvermine, just a short distance from Jan's home.

While Jan paints scenery with which she is intimately familiar, it is always a synecdoche, a detail in the grand scheme of things. A piece of paradise represents the entire planet; intertwined leaves represent luxuriant, totally unrestricted nature. This is why she sets little store by realism; when painting she follows the impressions left in her mind and reappropriates them. She draws, works with a squeegee and superimposes the layers of paint, which varies from thick to transparent, worked with a palette knife, a brush or sticks. "I love to feel the texture of the paint under my brush and my fingertips." Her primary intention is to capture the essence of things so that we can all experience the emotions within her. "In her work, she often leaves things unspoken to force the viewer to fill the void with their imagination."

She encourages us to embark on another journey.



Flora in the meadow, 30 x 40 inches, Oil on canvas.

PRACTICAL INFORMATIONS

Jan Dilenschneider – Sublimer la nature

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From July 5 to 28, 2018

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