

I N M A N G A L L E R Y

Kristin Musgnug *Disturbed Ground* July 12 – September 7, 2019

The paintings in the series *Disturbed Ground* represent a departure from **Kristin Musgnug's** usual process of on-site landscape painting, and began in response to Albrecht Durer's 1503 watercolor drawing, *Great Piece of Turf*. Durer's drawing is a nature study of grasses, dandelions, plantains, and other plants, growing out of a slab of earth. Musgnug dug up weedy chunks of ground and brought them into the studio to paint. She focused on waste places - vacant lots, roadsides, parking lots, and the like. These sites had been altered by humans - built on, gardened on, covered with soil from elsewhere - and then had been mostly left to their own devices. The resulting plant communities were a feral blend of introduced and opportunistic species, the kind of plants we think of as weeds. These plants are nature's equivalent of first aid - species that will quickly colonize the bare ground of a disrupted site.

The paintings present the pieces of ground as self-contained worlds, resting on discarded materials - styrofoam packaging, old rotting plywood, bits of a torn down house, and so on, referencing the abandoned status of the plants' original locations. Musgnug calls her paintings "quiet harbingers of a weed-filled planet to come as humans continue disrupting natural ecosystems."

Kristin Musgnug (born 1959, Buffalo, NY) received a BA in Art History from Williams College, MA, in 1981 and an MFA in Painting from Indiana University in 1988. From 1988 to 1990 she was an Artist in Residence at the Glassell School's Core Program, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Solo exhibitions include the North Cascades Institute Environmental Learning Center, Diablo Lake, WA (2015); *Un-Natural Histories: Paintings of Invasive Species*, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR (2010); Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS (1999); *Uses of Nature*, Galveston Arts Center, Galveston, TX (1998); and the Marko Cepenkov Center of Culture in Prilep Macedonia (1996).

Kristin Musgnug's paintings spring from an interest in the complex interactions between people and nature, including how our concept of nature shapes our actions toward the land. Painting on location is crucial to her process. The paintings are the products of an intimate experience of place. For Musgnug, the act of making a landscape painting has less to do with making an objective visual record and everything to do with investigating the ideas, fears and fantasies we attach to nature. The work draws on her interest in the scientific view of nature as well as the role nature occupies in the human psyche.

Musgnug lives and works in Fayetteville, AR, where she is Professor of Painting at the University of Arkansas.