

Deborah Wasserman



Recommended by Helaine Posner

Deborah Wasserman's intuitive, expressive paintings, drawings, and performances explore such subjects as the female body and subconscious, ecofeminism and environmental threat, and the heroine's quest. Her identity as a woman, a mother, and a migrant is reflected in her multicultural, socially aware practice that values the natural world and our fellow human beings. Wasserman's female *Bather* (2019), immersed in water and gazing skyward, suggests a longing to be one with nature as both sensory experience and spiritual journey. In a recent series of drawings titled *Amazon Dreaming* (2019) and *Amazon Dreaming 4*, (2020), the rain forest paradoxically appears as a barren landscape, ravaged by flames and littered with debris, the result of human exploitation and indifference. These depictions of natural disaster as an apocalyptic nightmare eerily resonate with our current crises.

Helaine Posner, Fall 2020

Bio

Deborah Wasserman is a graduate of the California Institute of the Arts and the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program. She has received grants from the Experimental Television Center, Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Aljira Center for the Arts, and the America-Israel Cultural Foundation. Her work has been exhibited in the USA, Brazil, the Netherlands, Germany, and Israel, in such venues as The Queens Museum of the Arts, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, The Tel Aviv Museum of the Arts, The Museum Of New Art, The World Wide Video Festival, White Columns, Pierogi Gallery, Socrates Park, and A.I.R Gallery. In 2017, Wasserman was awarded an IAP Social Practice fellowship from NYFA. In 2015, she was awarded a 5 year Su-Casa award from the New York State Department of Cultural Affairs. In addition, she received a 2018 grant from the Puffin Foundation, a 2019 grant from the Citizens Committee for New York, a Queens Council On The Arts New York grant in 2020, and she is currently a NYFA finalist in the category of printmaking/Drawing/Book Arts.

Artist Statement

I am a nomad, a migrant, a cultural hybrid and a wander woman, born in Brazil, raised in Israel and now living in the diverse New York City borough of Queens. My art reflects the yearning to belong, and the urge to embrace many perspectives through the dualities of high and low, darkness and light, beautiful and repulsive, pathetic and glorified.

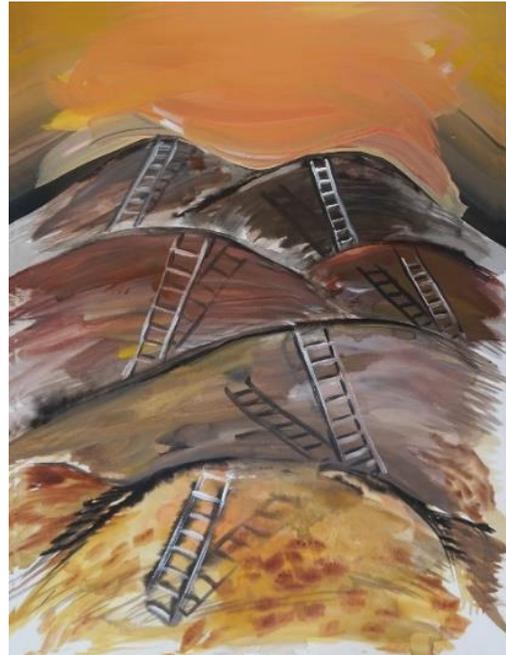
I paint and draw through multiple actions of layering, pouring, dripping, and spilling color, through repeated events of pigment application and erasure and mark-making. I paint on the wall, floor, and the table, mimicking the wanderer's frequent relocations, often working on the canvas sideways and upside down. My painting process entails repeated cycles of creative and destructive processes. Surfaces and images get erased as they emerge, painted over as they solidify, and then altered again, leaving behind residues and the rich soil of the under-paint. The act of staining, tearing, and applying clothes onto the canvas invokes women's domestic labor, chores, and rituals of cleaning. The act of tearing articles of women's clothing also serves as a gesture of grief and mourning, implying the shedding of one's skin, letting go, sacrifice and rebirth.

My paintings and drawings often depict inner and outer landscapes that allude to the body, to the earth, to paths and physical quests. These images draw parallels between my feminine succession and Mother Earth's life cycles, our striking, brutal, and fierce expressions, magic, fury, and grace. Flora, fauna and the elements of fire, water, earth, and sky are all manifestations of inner vistas as much as outer topographies. They are meditations on time, temporality and change, on spirit and matter. I construct visual narratives that fuse my personal recollections with collective histories, drawing inspirations from Feminism and women's work, aspects of Abstraction, landscape painting and Magical Realism. I depict houses consumed by fire, mountains speckled with tents, piles of stones and broken, burnt trees. I paint luscious plants, laundry lines, bushes of prickly pears and female bathers floating in shimmering water. Embedded in my work are themes of migration, women's journeys, and earth deterioration. These themes are largely tied to a critique of Western, Post-Capitalist society and its systematic exploitation of humans and natural resources. Painting allows the release of a wide range of emotions, intuitive understandings and associations that have no vessel in ordinary speech. It also demands from me visceral expression and trust in the intelligence of my body over the regurgitation of the mind. I find that the return to intuitive, sensory, and more ancient forms of knowledge, in this day and age is ultimately a transgressive act.

Works in the Exhibition



Deborah Wasserman 2020. Amazon Dreaming (4). Ink and Acrylic on Paper 25.5" x 40."



Deborah Wasserman 2019. Bather 2 (left). Ink, Acrylic, Oil, and Torn Clothes on Canvas 24" x 18"; The Road Less Traveled (right). Ink and Acrylic on Paper 30" x 22."



Deborah Wasserman 2019. Amazon Dreaming. Oil, Acrylic, and Torn Clothes on Canvas 48" x 36."