



The title of this show, *A Sudden Rush of Wonder*, comes from an essay by the Poet Laureate, Louise Gluck (1943- 2023). Gluck's poetry and essays are known for her emotional intensity and austere beauty, and in her famous work "Against Sincerity" Gluck argues against the literal in favor of an embodied art experience.

Gluck's insistence on art that transforms the actual and real into a deeper human truth is something I have been thinking about a lot over the last 6 months. I've been reflecting on my personal search for truth and beauty over the course of my entire career. In today's politically fraught time this search is more important to me than ever.

Two sources of inspiration led to a series of small abstract paintings and figure/garden paintings which were painted at different times in my artistic life. Both bodies of paintings set about exploring distilled experiences and observations.

The abstract work focuses on color that reflects on small acts while tending the land I live on. Saturated greens in native grasses find their way in the painting *Field*. Walking in my woods, I notice the the deep green of the Hemlock tree contrasting against a Maple next to it.

The figure/garden paintings originate from my residency at the American Academy in Rome. Standing before Roman wall frescos, buried for centuries, painted by unknown artists, I felt the fragments of ancient history that I still think deeply about today. Falling in love with the mythological story of Diana, Goddess of the Hunt, who sent her dogs after the stalker Acteon, prompted me to reconsider her in a series of works including *Diana at the Bath*.

"Poems are like little experiments" wrote Gluck. And when poems, art, and song successfully illuminate the unexpected it opens our minds. In showing these bodies of work side by side I aim to see paintings that *sing* with each other and stand in their own voice at the same time. Paintings that hint at deeper truths over vast time. Paintings that have their own sudden rush of wonder.

Richard Kooyman 2025