

gregory lind gallery

ERIC WOLF  
MAINE PAINTINGS

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*Rosenblum's Scholar's Rock*, 2010. Ink on paper, 30 x 22 inches.

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DAVID MASELLO

Eric Wolf occupies the very place he depicts. When he arrives every year at the Phillips Memorial Wilderness Preserve, near Oquossoc, Maine, and sets up camp and unfolds his painting table, he is surrounded by color. It is easy to imagine the blue-gray cast of the sky, the silver of Lake Mooselookmeguntic, the gradations of browns and greens along the surrounding hills, the yellow sunlight, even the occasional jewel-hued flashes of eagles, ducks, and loons. And there are the wildflowers, too, growing among lakeside rocks.

Yet, Wolf banishes those distractions of hues, emblematic as they may be of that part of Maine's Western Mountains to which he has been journeying since 1989. Wolf seeks and captures the purest distillation of the landscape. For this solo show at Gregory Lind Gallery of his most recent paintings, Wolf has once again stuck hard to his preferred palette of black and white, intermixed now with tonal grays. The white is that of the paper, functioning as a kind of negative as he brushes on the ink in swift, broad movements.

His resulting images of the elements he covets in Maine—the silhouette of the mountains, the undulating waves of the lake, towering pines and birches, abstractions of cloud formations, rocky outcroppings, approaching storms—may be chromatically limited, but every finished work is vibrant with form. Wolf's embrace of black demonstrates that the color is, indeed, the most versatile of all. Sometimes, it feels upon walking away from an exhibition of Wolf's works that what you had been seeing was in color. So potent are his images, so narrative in quality that what you see feels wholly complete.

Wolf admits to entering a kind of Zen-like calm when making his brush and ink paintings. "These are made in single, working sessions, start to finish," he emphasizes. As he always has, Wolf prefers to work in solitude, on site, sleeping, eating, working, daydreaming where the subject matter resides. He typically spends a week or two in situ, experiencing what he characterizes as "a creative burst of energy that I work through until it ebbs."

Since having spent a formative summer at Skowhegan in 1989, Wolf has rarely departed from his decided embrace of black and white. By keeping to that limited palette, he has been able to court, simultaneously, both abstraction and representation. Viewers of these new works, as well as prior ones, know what is before them, but those elements of the landscape assume a presence they might not were they solely expressed abstractly or in great detail. With every one of the works in this show, the viewer stands right with Wolf as he looks over the miles-wide lake to distant islands and mountains that appear and disappear, depending on the shifting light and weather conditions.

The embrace of black and white harkens to Far Eastern artistic traditions, notably those in China and Japan. In traditional brush and ink paintings from those cultures, the mark, that unsigned signature, that defining hand of the artist and its calligraphic presence, is paramount on the surface. Of that mark of the artist, Wolf has written, “This is a value that I hold in high esteem.” Indeed, no one would mistake a Wolf creation for anyone else’s.

Wolf responds in a profound, even spiritual, way to place. In 1999, he was a resident of Giverny, the home and gardens of Claude Monet, and while there he experienced a kind of aesthetic epiphany. “The Impressionists blazed the way for artists like me, working from observation, while bringing a fresh and evolving modernism forth in that process,” Wolf says. “Artists like Van Gogh, Cezanne, and Gaugin absorbed aesthetics and imagery from Japan, China, and the Far East, which resulted from a pervasive opening up of the East to the West. It was an exciting time. These artists, in turn, inspired me, as well as many others.”

Viewers of this show, featuring Wolf’s newest and boldest work, are able to witness his passion for Maine. He renders on paper the textures, the shapes, the sheer volumes of the nature there, and with a confident fluidity. He knows what he is doing. He works fast and moves on to the next work. He captures those elements that have been there, often inert, for countless millennia but he is also aware of their capricious ability to change moment to moment. When he begins a work, he does so at precisely the moment that the particular element in his focus occupies in time and space. To wait, to delay, is to lose what is there, right before him—what might be called the perfect. In that sense, too, Wolf’s work is both spontaneous and still.

Wolf speaks of these wilderness sojourns of his as “experiences of immersion.” He is immersed, of course, in an actual landscape, but also a mindscape. “The pleasure of this process of making art in nature is a key element, that has provided a seemingly limitless motivation, to always do more, to always go back, to keep pressing on, and to do it again,” he has said recently. Wolf returns again and again to the same region of Maine, but he never sees the same things. He never depicts seemingly unchanging natural elements in the same ways. And so the viewer gets to experience his works with a freshness that feels akin to the bracing air of Maine, tinged with the scents of so many trees, the lake, the earth.

With every one of his expeditions northward to Maine from his home and studio in upstate New York, Wolf leaves with an output. Along with that folded up tent, a growth of beard, and ink-stained fingers, Wolf packs away a permanent vision of what he is leaving behind, this time. He’ll be back.

David Masello is a cultural essayist, critic, and feature writer, based in New York. (davidmasello.com)



*Japanese Bridge and Nypheas at Giverny, 1999. Ink on paper, 34 x 24 inches.*







*Bald Mountain*, 2016. Ink on paper, 30 x 22 inches



*Azischohos*, 2016. Ink on paper, 30 x 22 inches

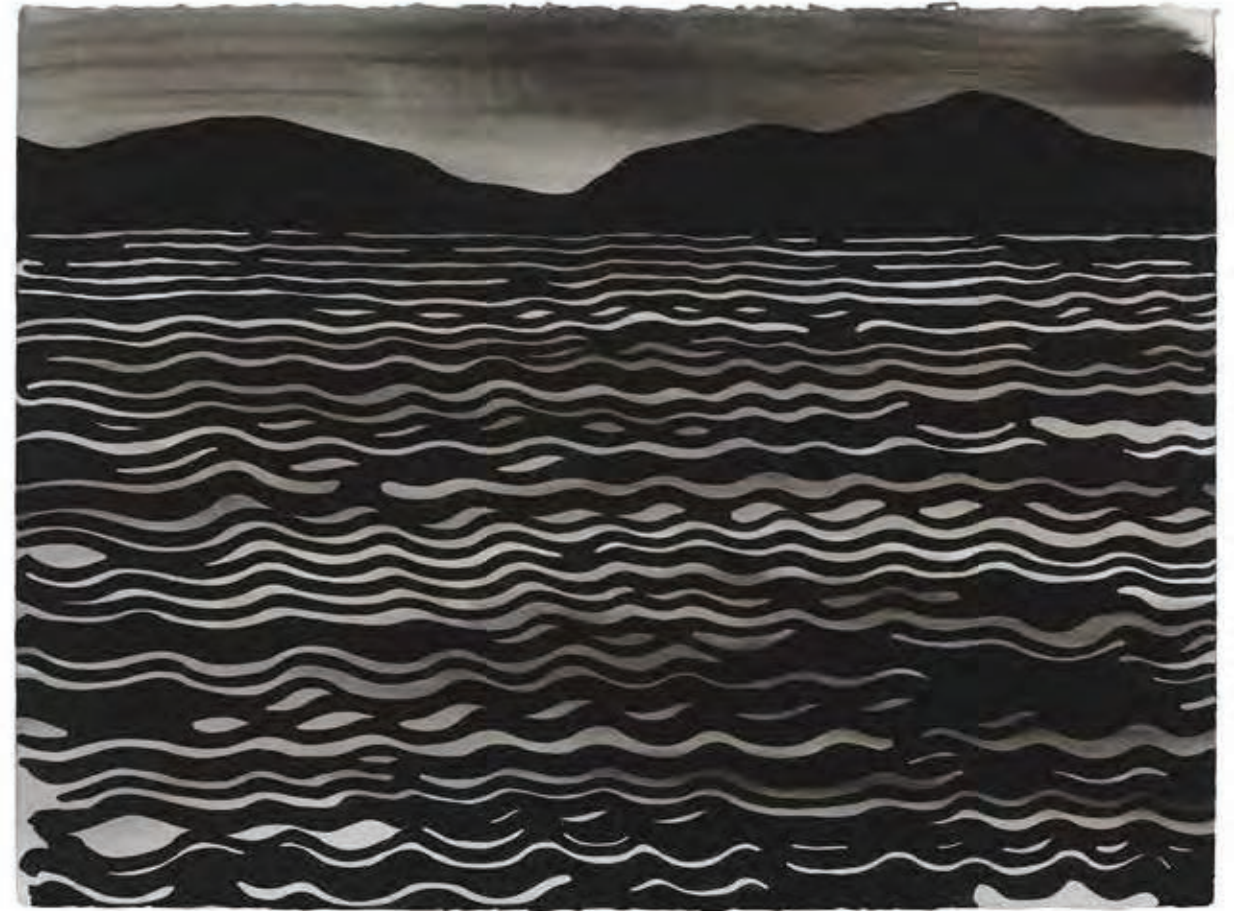


*Reflection*, 2016. Ink on paper, 22 x 30 inches





*Storm Sky*, 2016. Ink on paper, 30 x 22 inches



*Observatory Mountain*, 2016. Ink on paper, 22 x 30 inches



*Toothaker Island*, 2016. Ink on paper, 30 x 22 inches





17

*Toothaker Island*, 2016. Ink on paper, 30 x 22 inches



19

*Mooselookmeguntic Lake*, 2016. Ink on paper, 22 x 30 inches



21

*Night Lake*, 2016. Ink on paper, 22 x 30 inches





Maine, 2017. Ink on paper, 29 x 42 inches

ERIC WOLF

Born 1960, New Jersey  
Lives and works in New York

EDUCATION

- 1990 MFA, The City College, City University of New York
- 1989 Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture
- 1982 BFA, Rhode Island School of Design

EXHIBITIONS

- 2018 *Eric Wolf: Maine Paintings*: Gregory Lind Gallery, San Francisco  
*The Creek Flows Into the River: New Work from the Hudson Valley*: Walnut Hill Gallery, Hudson; curated by Richard Saja  
*The Nature Lab: An Homage to the RISD Nature Lab and Founder Edna Lawrence*: LABspace, Hillsdale, NY; curated by Eric Wolf  
*Matereality*: Geoffrey Young Gallery, Great Barrington; curated by Phil Knoll and Sue Muskat
- 2017 *Green: John Dilg, Floryn Honnet, David Shaw, Eric Wolf*: Jeff Bailey Gallery, Hudson  
*Taconic North*: LABspace, Hillsdale, NY; curated by Susan Jennings and Julie Torres
- 2016 *Eric Wolf: Recent Paintings*: Oresman Gallery, Brown Fine Arts Center, Smith College, Northampton, MA  
*Black and Blue plus Orange*: Geoffrey Young Gallery, Great Barrington, MA; curated by Sue and Phil Knoll  
*Beautiful Object: Upsetting Still Life*: Jeffrey Leder Gallery, Long Island City, NY; curated by Patrick Neal  
*Eric Wolf: Paintings*: Grubbs Gallery, Williston Northampton School, Easthampton, MA  
Foundation Barbin presents, *Redux (Sort of)*: Kai Matsumiya Gallery, NY; curated by Lucky DeBellevue
- 2015 *Earth Dreams*: Eagle Studio, Brooklyn, NY; curated by Alyssa Fanning  
*Remains to be Seen*: Geoffrey Young Gallery, Great Barrington, MA; curated by Sue and Phil Knoll  
*Improvised Showboat #8*: Julie Evans Studio, Hudson, NY; curated by Loren Britton and Zachary Keeting  
*The House of Oops*: Bushwick Open Studios, Brooklyn, NY; curated by Meli SanFiorenzo
- 2012 *Grey Full*: Jeff Bailey Gallery, New York; curated by Geoffrey Young
- 2011 *Major Grey*: Geoffrey Young Gallery, Great Barrington, MA; curated by Geoffrey Young
- 2008 *Hand Drawn*: Storefront Artist Project, Pittsfield, MA; curated by Peter Dudek  
*Shimmering Light Across American Culture from the Collection of Susan Brynteson*, (Yaddo) Grolier Club, NY  
*Voyage à Giverny*: Musee Marmottan Monet, Paris; curated by Dominique H. Vasseur, M. Melissa Wolfe, and Joe Houston
- 2007 *In Monet's Garden*: Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus, OH; curated by Dominique H. Vasseur, M. Melissa Wolfe, and Joe Houston
- 2006 *Block Party: An Exhibition of Drawings*: Daniel Weinberg Gallery, Los Angeles

	<i>Twist it Twice</i> : Moti Hasson Gallery, NY; curated by Franklin Evans	
	<i>Eric Wolf Paintings</i> : Jeff Bailey Gallery, NY	
2004	<i>Art on Paper</i> : Weatherspoon Art Museum, Greensboro, NC	
	<i>Glass of Water</i> : The Painting Center, NY; curated by Pamela Lawton	
2003	<i>Giverny</i> : Salon 94, NY; curated by Yvonne Force Villareal and Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn	
	<i>Launched</i> (Inaugural Exhibition) Jeff Bailey Gallery, NY	
2001	<i>Locating Drawing</i> : Lawing Gallery, Houston, TX; curated by Maureen Mahoney	
2000	<i>Eric Wolf Drawings</i> : Fredericks Freiser Gallery, New York	
	<i>Against An Infinite Horizon</i> : Caren Golden Fine Art, NY; curated by Chuck Agro	
	<i>Paintland</i> : Schmidt Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; curated by Terry R. Myers	
1999	<i>Walking</i> : Danese Gallery, NY; curated by Adam Sheffer	
	<i>Another Country: The Constructed Landscape</i> : Brent Sikkema & Greenberg Van Doren Fine Art, NY; curated by Augusto Arbizo	
1998	<i>Psychological Drawings</i> : Gallery Korea, NY; curated by Jesse Joo	
	<i>Finding the Familiar</i> : Zeitgeist Gallery, Nashville, TN; curated by Will Berry	
	<i>Wallpaper</i> : Nicholas Davies Gallery, NY; curated by Nicholas Davies	
1997	<i>Eric Wolf: New Paintings</i> : Jessica Fredericks Gallery, NY	
1996	<i>Water</i> : James Graham and Sons, NY; curated by Valerie McKenzie	
	<i>Eric Wolf Paintings</i> : Jessica Fredericks Gallery, NY	
1995	Inaugural Exhibition: Paul Morris Gallery, NY	
	<i>Fresh Air</i> : Schmidt Contemporary Art, St. Louis, MO; curated by Jim Schmidt	
	<i>Still Life Portrait Landscape</i> : Bravin Post Lee, NY; curated by Karin Bravin	
1995	<i>Rest and Motion</i> : Margaret Murray Fine Arts, NY; curated by Margaret Murray	
1994	<i>Eric Wolf Paintings</i> (first solo exhibition): Kristina Wasserman Gallery, Providence, RI	
	<i>Small Paintings</i> : Paul Morris Gallery, NY	
	<i>Written, Spoken, Drawn in Lacanian Ink</i> : Threadwaxing Space, NY; curated by Josefina Ayerza	
	<i>Works on Paper</i> : Schmidt Contemporary Art, St. Louis, MO	
	<i>Landscapes... Ideas</i> : Apex Art, NY; curated by Michael Toledo	
1994	<i>New from New York</i> : Montgomery Glasoe Fine Art, Minneapolis, MN	
1993	Painting Invitational: Barbara Gladstone Gallery, NY; curated by Richard Flood	
	<i>The Return of the Cadavre Exquis</i> : The Drawing Center, NY	
	Selections / Winter: The Drawing Center, NY; curated by James Elaine and Annie Philbin	
1992	<i>Mimique</i> : Proctor Art Center Gallery, Bard College, Annandale on Hudson, NY; curated by Michael Madore	

BIBLIOGRAPHY

David Masello. “Eric Wolf: Maine Paintings” (Catalogue Essay), Gregory Lind Gallery, San Francisco, 2018

Interview with Zachary Keeting and Chris Joy. *gorkysgranddaughter.com*, July 28, 2016

“Beautiful Object: Upsetting Still Life,” (Catalogue Essay), curator Patrick Neal, 2016

“Earth Dreams,” (Catalogue essay) curator Alyssa Fanning, 2015

“Petite Mort: Recollections of a Queer Public,” Forever and Today, Inc. Written and conceived by Carlos Motta and Jost Lubin-Levy, 2011

L’Ogresse de Paris, March 16, 2009. (Review) “Voyage a Giverny: Monet au Musee Marmottan,” Musee Marmottan, Paris

Maureen Marozeau. March 14, 2008. “Claude Monet au XXle Siecle,” (Review) *ArtClair.com*, Voyage a Giverny, Musee Marmottan, Paris

“In Monet’s Garden: Artists and the Lure of Giverny,” Scala, London, 2007. (Catalogue) Joe Houston, Dominique H. Vasseur, M. Melissa Wolfe, James Yood

“Art on Paper Biennial,” *Carolina Arts*, January 2005. (Review) Weatherspoon Art Museum, Greensboro, NC

Ken Johnson. *The New York Times*, April 7, 2000. (Review) “Eric Wolf / Drawings,” Frederick Freiser Gallery

Alexi Worth. *The New Yorker*, April 10, 2000. (Review) “Wolf at Fredericks Freiser,” Fredericks Freiser Gallery

*The New Yorker*, February 14, 2000. (Review) “Against an Infinite Horizon,” curated by Chuck Agro, Caren Golden Fine Art, NY

Ken Johnson. *The New York Times*, July 2, 1999. (Art in Review) “Walking,” Danese Gallery, NY

Ken Johnson. *The New York Times*, June 16, 1998. (Art Brief) “Wallpaper at Nicholas Davies,” curated by Lisa Jacobs, Nicholas Davies Gallery

Alan Bostick. *The Tennessean*, November 1, 1998. (Review) “Good Vibrations: Finding the Familiar,” Zeitgeist Gallery, Nashville, TN

Jonathan Marx. *Nashville Scene*, November 5, 1998. (Review) “Finding the Familiar,” Zeitgeist Gallery, Nashville, TN

Vincent Katz. *Art in America*, June 1998. (Review) “Eric Wolf at Jessica Fredericks,” Jessica Fredericks Gallery, NY

Julie Caniglia. *Artforum*, May 1998. (Review) “Eric Wolf at Jessica Fredericks,” Jessica Fredericks Gallery, NY

Roberta Smith. *The New York Times*, December 12, 1997. (Art in Review) “Eric Wolf at Jessica Fredericks,” Jessica Fredericks Gallery, NY

David Rimanelli. *The New Yorker*, April 15, 1996. (Review) “Eric Wolf: Paintings,” Jessica Fredericks Gallery, NY

Holland Cotter. *The New York Times*, April 12, 1996. (Art in Review) “Eric Wolf Paintings,” Jessica Fredericks Gallery, NY

*Eric Wolf Paintings*, 1996. “Eric Wolf Paints a Picture” (Catalogue Essay) by Terry R. Myers, Jessica Fredericks Gallery, NY

Stuart Servetar. *New York Press*, April 10, 1996. (Review) “Eric Wolf Paintings,” Jessica Fredericks Gallery, NY

XXXFruit No. 2 / Soil 1996; edited by Vincent Gagliostro

*Lacanian Ink* 9, Winter 1995; edited by Josefina Ayerza

Gregory Volk. *Art News*, Summer, 1995. “On the Edge: Eric Wolf,” (Essay)

Holland Cotter. *The New York Times*, March 3, 1995; (Review) “Inaugural Exhibition,” Paul Morris Gallery, NY

Bill Van Sicle. *The Providence Journal Bulletin*, December 9, 1994. (Review) “Eric Wolf Paintings,”  
Kristina Wasserman Gallery, Providence, RI

Terry R. Myers. *Flash Art*, October, 1993. (Review) “Painting Invitational,” Barbara Gladstone Gallery, NY

Roberta Smith. *The New York Times*, July 2, 1993. (Review) “Painting Invitational,” Barbara Gladstone Gallery, NY

Andrew Freiser. Cover, March. (Review) “Selections Winter 1993,” The Drawing Center, NY

Roberta Smith. *The New York Times*, January 15, 1993. (Review) “Selections Winter 1993,” The Drawing Center, NY

FELLOWSHIPS AND RESIDENCIES

2008    Yaddo, Saratoga Springs, NY

1999    Fondation Claude Monet, Giverny, France

1994    Yaddo, Saratoga Springs, NY

          Blue Mountain Center, Blue Mountain Lake, NY

          The MacDowell Colony, Peterborough, NH

1993    Art Omi, Ghent, NY

FOUNDATION GRANTS

1999    The Versailles Foundation

1997    The Peter S. Reed Foundation