

Chester Arnold**HUFFPOST ARTS & CULTURE****12 Must See Painting Shows: November 2012****Steven Zevitas**

Publisher, New American Paintings



Chester Arnold. *The Old Narcissus*, 2012. Chester Arnold. Courtesy of Catharine Clark Gallery.

More than forty *New American Paintings'* alumni are on view this month throughout the country. They range from mid-career painter, Trenton Doyle Hancock, to 2010 Hunter MFA grad Michael Hilsman, who is having his first solo exhibition this month at Louis B. James in New York City. The San Francisco area alone has six NAP artists on view including, Jim Gaylord at Gregory Lind and Conrad Ruiz at Jessica Silverman. If you love painting and live in the Bay Area then you are fortunate, as there are a number of first rate shows on view this month.

All of us at *New American Paintings* want to send our best wishes out to New York's art world, which was hit hard by Hurricane Sandy. We know a number of gallerists and artists who have been adversely affected by the storm. It is encouraging to see some of our friends, such as ZieherSmith, reopen so quickly after such devastation.

The show must go on, as they say, and even as a number of galleries are busy with repairs, many more are open for business. As always, there are dozens of painting shows to choose from in New York. Some of my top picks this month include: Wayne Thiebaud at Acquavella; Ed Ruscha at Gagosian; Jules De Balincourt at Salon 94; Mark Bradford at Sikkema Jenkins; and Tal R at Cheim & Read. If you are in the Lower East Side, be sure to catch Joshua Neustein's exhibition at Untitled, which is his first solo in New York in two decades.

Please visit the *New American Paintings*/BLOG for a more comprehensive list of must-see painting shows in November.

New American Paintings magazine is a juried exhibition-in-print and the largest series of artist competitions in the United States. Working with experienced curators, *New American Paintings* reviews the work of thousands of emerging artists each year. Forty artists are selected to appear in each bi-monthly edition, many of whom go on to receive substantial critical and commercial success. Additional content focuses on the medium of painting, those who influence its direction, and the role contemporary painting plays within the art world. Visit *New American Paintings* for more information or to subscribe.

Chester Arnold

San Francisco Chronicle

F2 Ovation | SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE AND SFGATE.COM | Thursday-Sunday, December 27-30, 2012

THIS WEEKEND

MUSIC

San Francisco Chamber Orchestra: Benjamin Simon conducts the orchestra in "Dial M for Music," a program highlighted by the world premiere of Harold Meltzer's Sinfonia Concertante for Violin and Viola. Also on the program are Mozart's work of the same name and Mendelssohn's Sinfonia No. 9 in C. Violinist Scott St. John and violist Sharon Wei are the soloists.

3 p.m. Sunday, Herbst Theatre, 401 Van Ness Ave., S.F. 8 p.m. Monday. First Congregational Church, 2345 Channing Way, Berkeley. 3 p.m. Tuesday. First Palo Alto United Methodist Church, 625 Hamilton Ave. Free. (415) 692-3367. www.sfchamberorchestra.org.



John Todd / S.F. Chamber Orchestra

Music Director Benjamin Simon leads the orchestra.



John Wilson White / Phocasso

Chester Arnold's "The Legacy of Henry King" is in the gallery show.

ART

Chester Arnold: A Pilgrim's Progress: Think Paul Bunyan before John Bunyan. Despite his show's title, Arnold's darkly comic vision of Gold Rush dead-enders points toward no saving destination. His allegory of lessons never learned evokes the futility of the artistic life, while his paintings in their exuberance make its temptations plain.

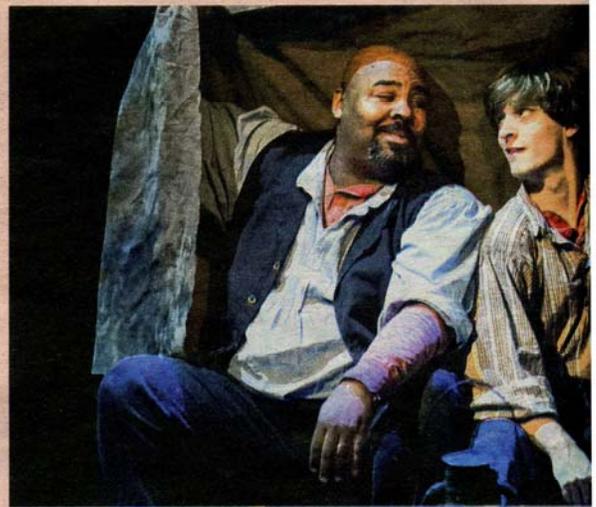
11 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday. Through Jan. 12. Catharine Clark Gallery, 150 Minna St., S.F. (415) 399-1439. www.cclarkgallery.com.

THEATER

Big River: TheatreWorks' fine revival of the Roger Miller musical adaptation of Mark Twain's "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" comes to the end of its tuneful run this weekend. James Monroe Iglehart's Jim anchors Robert Kelley's strong production.

8 p.m. Thursday (Dec. 27)-Saturday, 7 p.m. Sunday, 2 p.m. Saturday-Sunday. Lucie Stern Theatre, 1301 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. \$23-\$73. (650) 463-1960. www.theatreworks.org.

Brava's No Fiesta: Ma year headli with her F benefit for tured comi derwoman Popovich a 9 p.m. M ter, 2781 24 641-7657. w



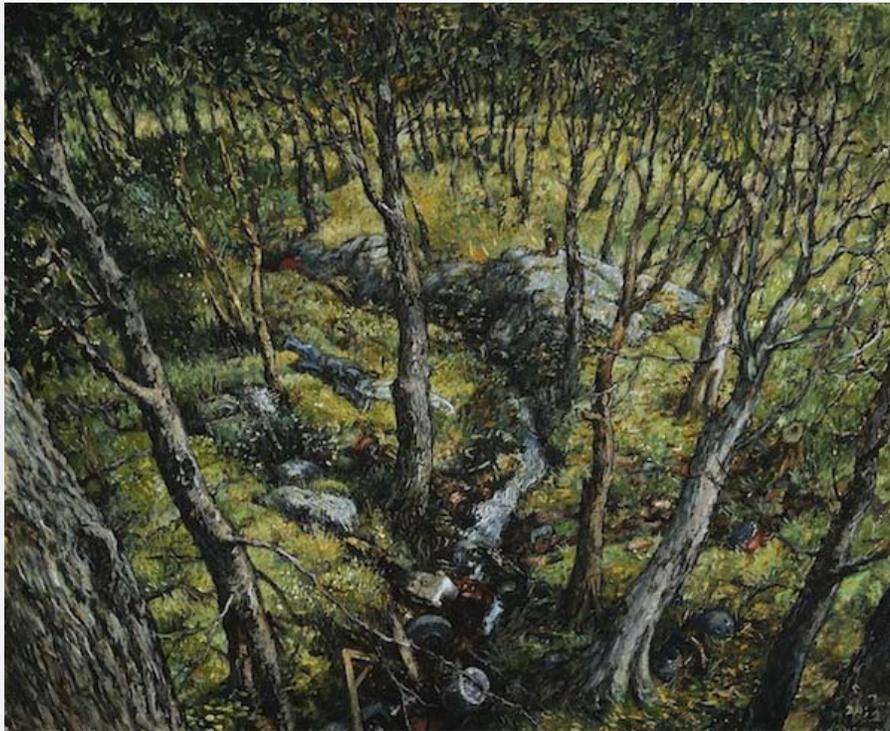
James Monroe Iglehart (left) carries the show as the slave, Huck as they seek shelter from the rain in the musical "Big River."

Chester Arnold

SFAQ

INTERNATIONAL ARTS AND CULTURE

“Chester Arnold: A Pilgrim’s Progress” at Catharine Clark Gallery

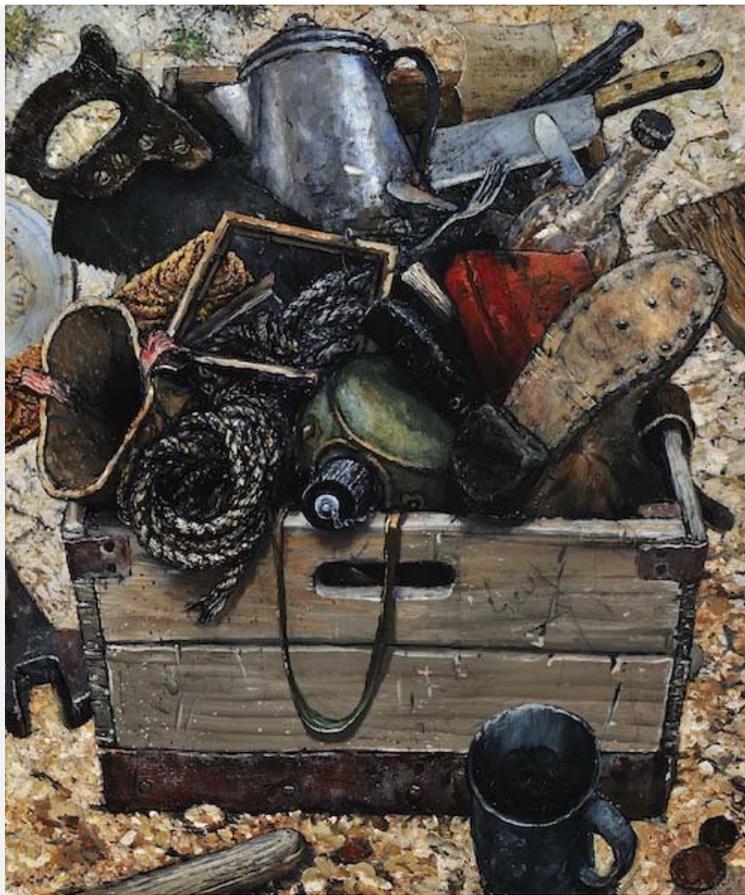


Chester Arnold, Upper Shit Creek Pastorate, 2012. Oil on linen. 18 x 22 inches. Courtesy of Catharine Clark Gallery.

Afraid of taking a chance on the unknown and its potentially negative consequences, (failure, embarrassment, death), people will always be drawn to art about a perilous journey for a prize. At Catharine Clark Gallery, Chester Arnold’s paintings of men living in the woods and mining in America were inspired by John Bunyan’s 1678 “Pilgrim’s Progress...,” an allegorical story of English Protestants apostasy from the Roman Catholic Church. Arnold’s “A Pilgrim’s Progress” is a journey for mineral wealth, Westward Expansionism, and spiritual freedom, most of which ends as a skeleton in parched earth. The closest his seekers get to a prize is living in an isolated shanty tent in the woods—which is, admittedly, appealing.

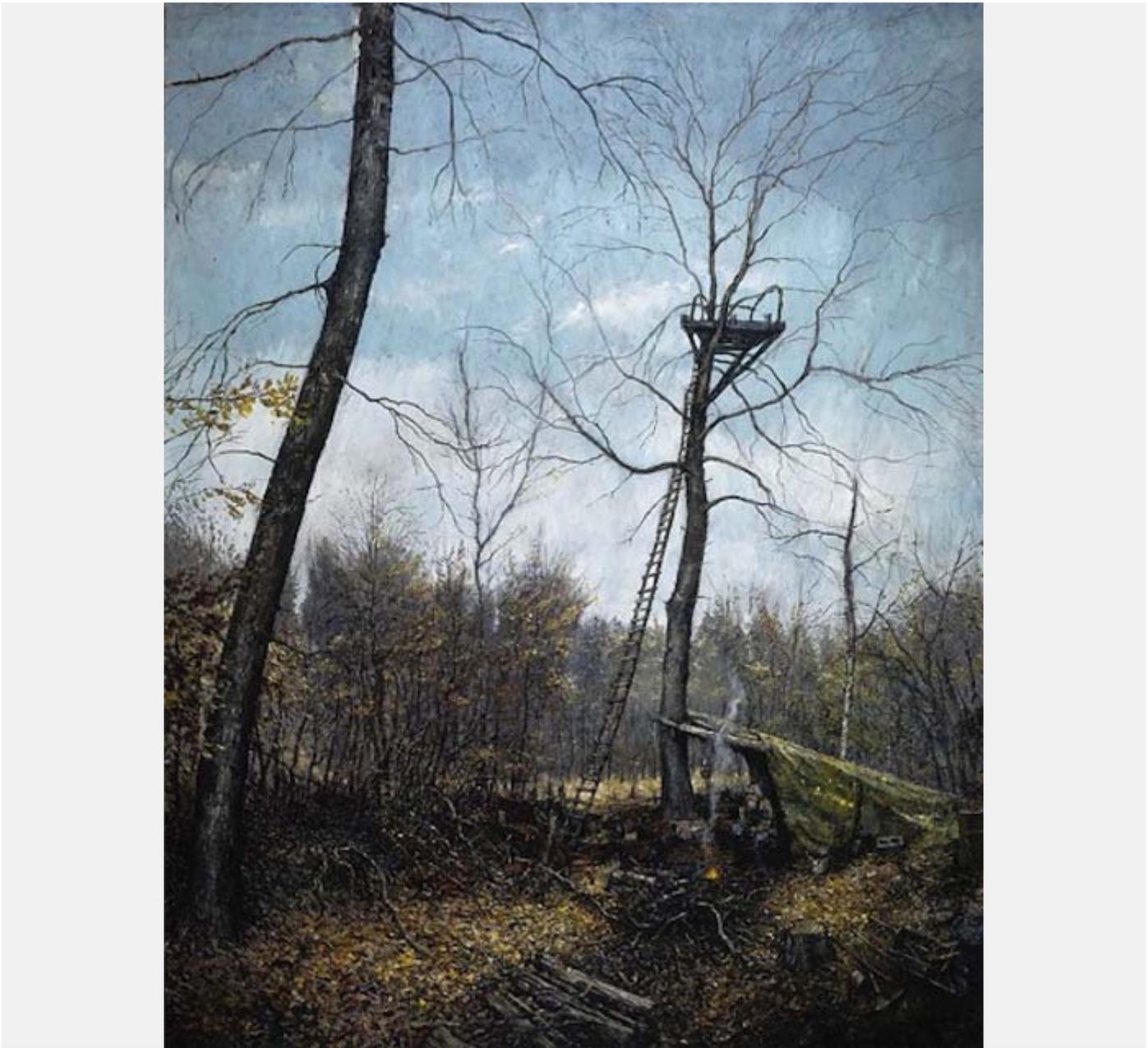


Chester Arnold, *Trouble at the Heavenly Host Mine*, 2011. Oil on panel. 8 x 10 inches. Courtesy of Catharine Clark Gallery.



Chester Arnold, *The Legacy of Henry King*, 2012. Oil on linen. 56 x 46 inches. Courtesy of Catharine Clark Gallery.

Arnold's paintings resemble the "Robinson Crusoe" and "Treasure Island" illustrator N.C. Wyeth's in their graphic quality and distance from the subject. This makes sense for the original "Pilgrims Progress," which has one fantasy quest hurdle after the next (sinking in a bog, the imposing Mount Sinai), though makes slightly less sense for the dysentery adventures of people moving west in America, with its myths of Paul Bunyan and a rosy version of the Lewis and Clark story overshadowed by the reality of yoked Chinese workers moving rocks. That piece of American history was made pretty real for kids in the past twenty years. He stipples the paint a bit like the grandfather of the Wyeth dynasty too, but loosely, and lacking N.C.'s competency with impasto; a lot of the high points of paint don't have anything to do with dimensionality or effect. This is not to say that Arnold isn't technically skilled. The aforementioned best-case scenario, "60 Years in the Forest," has a classical landscapes' balance of composition, repoussoir, mix of precise to spontaneous stroke, and sharpness to blur. "60 Years in the Forest" makes the small, messy paintings on unforgiving panels look like a miner painted them.



Chester Arnold, 60 Years in the Forest, 2012. Oil on linen. 72 x 60 inches. Courtesy of Catharine Clark Gallery.

Chester Arnold's "A Pilgrim's Progress" is fantastic, and it has very little to do with the abundance of narratives he's working with. The series' scenes are wild, far beyond most of our daily lives, and make things that are conceptually ugly look idealized or heroic (dumps, tunnels into the ground look like a testament to man's will rather than a scar on the earth). When did you last see a contemporary painting of bootstrapping men and a landscape that could so easily overpower you? It's life affirming, a reminder of how much there is outside the gallery and outside the city. Skeletons, a dead man's effects, broken bridges and natural calamities do nothing to dissuade the call to the viewer to wide open spaces and adventure.



Chester Arnold, Grubstake, 2008. Oil on linen. 78 x 94 inches. Courtesy of Catharine Clark Gallery.

"Chester Arnold: A Pilgrim's Progress" is on view at Catharine Clark Gallery through January 12, 2013.

-Kendall George

Chester Arnold



Chester Arnold: Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco

Recommendation by Chérie Louise Turner



Chester Arnold, "Grubstake," 2008, oil on linen, 78 x 94 inches

Continuing through January 12, 2013

The miner, the tools and residue of his life, and the world he inhabits are the focus of Chester Arnold's newest body of paintings, both grand (78 x 94 inches) and small (8 x 10 inches). As in his previous work, Arnold applies earthy tones in frequent and fluid strokes, creating scenes that are at once frenetic and enchanting; think moody Van Gogh meets the pointillism of Seurat.

The works, though always representational, can almost break apart. An example is "Miner's Life #1," which features a mining tunnel littered with the detritus of the miner and low-tech tunneling infrastructure. Details reveal themselves slowly as man-made or man-built objects initially blend into the landscape. The gritty earth envelops and swallows man up (to that end, two other works actually feature the half-buried skeletons of miners). In other works, such as the breathtaking "Grubstake," which takes a point of view from above a raven soaring over a deep, narrow river valley, we see mere hints of the miner's activity far below. Arnold makes the image tight and dramatic, its mood light and glorious.

Further adding to the dynamism of this show are the engrossing compositions — deep canyons, no-end-to-be-seen mine shafts sunk deep down into the earth — and changing perspectives — from god-like high-in-the-sky vantage points to the eye-level of a small animal. Together then, the show is an epic journey, both visually and emotionally, from the heavens to the bottom of the world.

Chester Arnold



Catharine Clark Gallery: A Pilgrim's Progress - Chester Arnold.

Review by Tami Tsark:
11.03.12

Chester Arnold's show presents panoramas of canyons, creeks, and chasms; journeys to countrysides, forests, and mines; and dialogs with bones, pails and hats. As you enter the gallery, the paintings strike you as contemporary work created by an "old-world" painter. The paintings take you to places you feel you might know, but know you have never been. Look beyond the rich, expertly rendered layers of paint and you'll find, upon closer examination, familiar but unknown objects and memorabilia. The tools, the skeletons, and other magical things that are lodged into the crevices and the nooks and crannies of the majestic environments, revealing a hidden yet palpable unknown story (unless you're fortunate enough to hear the stories told by the painter himself).

The show's opening reception on November 3rd includes an artist's "walk-through" and gives a lucky audience insight into his work, his paintings and his teachings-- as a journey-- which he fondly describes as the "disorganized religion of art." (The show's title comes from-- and references-- the Christian

allegory by John Bunyan.) He explains that the work is idea-driven and reflects his childhood of "Sixty Years in the Forest." Profoundly in love with painting at an early age, it is clear that this could not be more true for Arnold now. This show is one of discovered narrative. At first glance, you are presented with rich moody environments. Look closer and you'll uncover and be taken-in by work which is cleverly embedded with humor, and with deep translucent light. The content is one of rich allegory and delicate spirit. Chester Arnold describes the work as "a physical objectification of detail... an inseparable union of interests" which he coins as a new genre of painting, "Psycho Realism." Every paint stroke and every object reveals his love, his acute exploration, and his celebration of these worlds.

If you've not yet seen the show, I encourage you to journey into these spaces and embark on the passage of time and experience through which these paintings might lead you.



Evidence, 2011; oil on linen; 78 x 94 inches



Installation view of *Tools of the Trade* (2012) and *A Game of Bones* (2012)

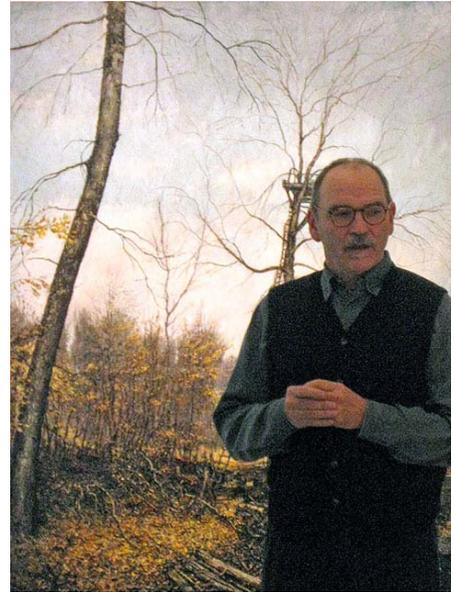
Art by Chester Arnold at Catharine Clark Gallery.

Chester Arnold degraded environment art.



60 Years in the Forest, 2012; Oil on linen; 71 ½ x 56 inches

Art by Chester Arnold at Catharine Clark Gallery.



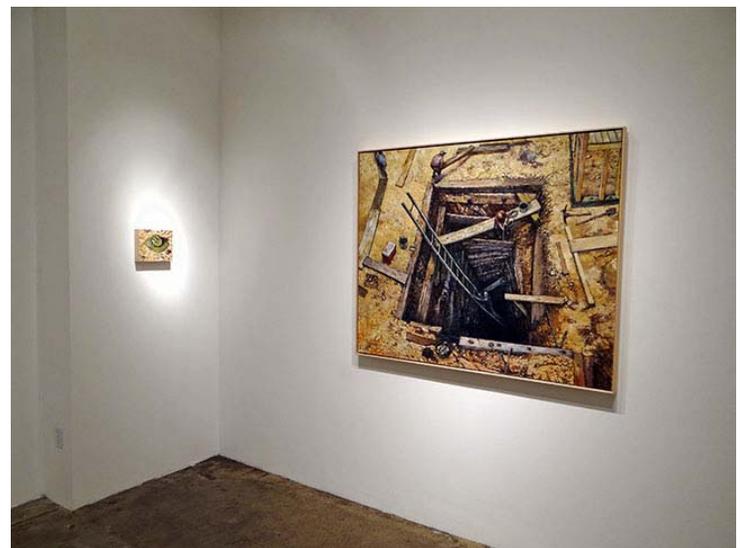
Detail, *60 Years in the Forest*, 2012; Oil on linen; 71 ½ x 56 inches

Chester Arnold discourses on his art (image c/o Tami Tsark).



Installation view of *Grubstake* (2008) and *The Legacy of Henry King* (2012)

Environmental art by Chester Arnold at Catharine Clark Gallery.



Installation view of *Old Hat* (2012) and *Small Time Operation* (2012)

Human impact art by Chester Arnold.



Installation view of Chester Arnold's exhibition *A Pilgrim's Progress*



Installation view of Chester Arnold's exhibition *A Pilgrim's Progress*

Art by Chester Arnold at Catharine Clark Gallery.

Chester Arnold art.



Post-Chester-Arnold-art-show redux at Catharine Clark Gallery.

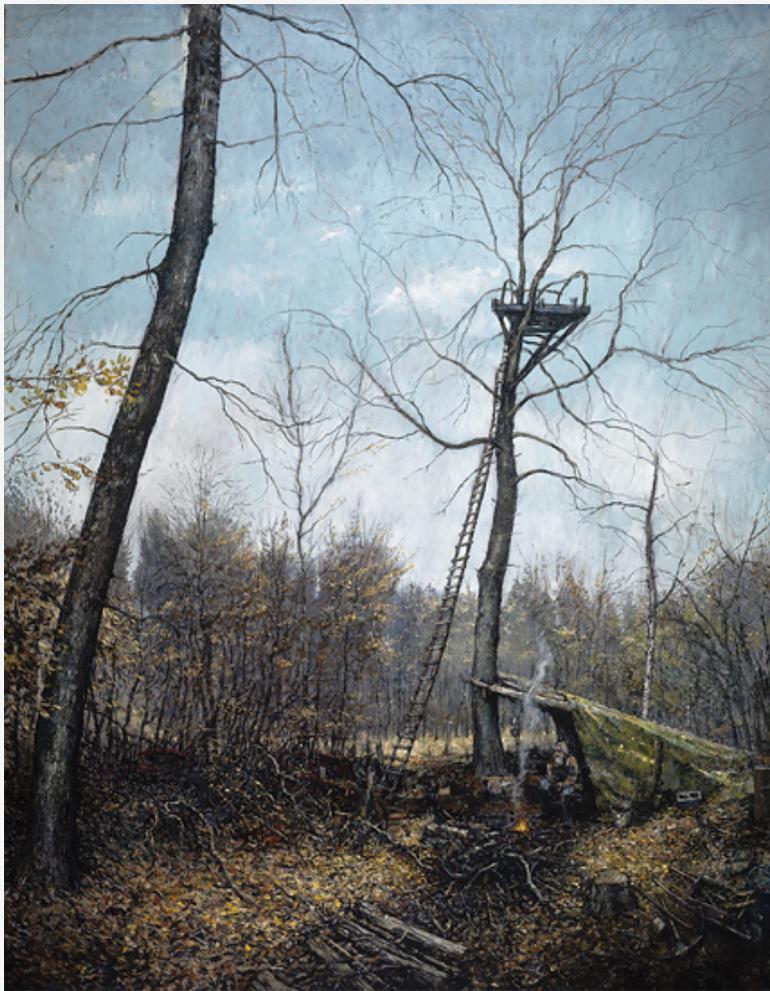
Painting & Drawing

08 November 2012

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CATHARINE CLARK GALLERY, San Francisco



Chester Arnold
60 Years in the Forest, 2012
Oil on linen
71 ½ x 56 inches
Courtesy of Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco

CHESTER ARNOLD

A Pilgrim's Progress

November 3 – December 22, 2012

Catharine Clark Gallery announces *A Pilgrim's Progress*, a solo exhibition of new paintings by **Chester Arnold**.

For Chester Arnold's 2012 solo exhibition at Catharine Clark Gallery, the artist presents new paintings rooted in imagery of the west - grand landscapes scarred by the work of miners, stratified and marked by history: geological and human. Metaphorical narratives and occasions for contemplating the duality of the human journey unfold on the painting's panoramic stages. The binary sides of our emotional experiences, dark and light, are present in each work. The title of the exhibition, *A Pilgrim's Progress*, references a Christian allegory written by John Bunyan and published in 1678, *The Pilgrim's Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come*. It is regarded as one of the most significant works of religious English literature. The paintings in the exhibit convey the artist's personal journey through what he calls "the disorganized religion of art." "As the secular madman that I am, there is a constant, inescapable commentary staring back at me from the Judeo-Christian pollution in my early life. I love the stories, but deplore the dogma." Arnold's painted imagery also grapples with transitions and the passage of time (perhaps his own aging) through depictions of elderly men, skeletons, and the heavily chiseled chasms in the earth. Arnold's tenebrous mood in the paintings is tempered by passages that are also humorous and light, providing visual reprieve and a bit of optimism in the ponderous, larger narratives.

American by birth, but raised in post-war Germany during the formative years of his childhood, Chester Arnold is interested in the capacity of painting to convey the complexities of the human psyche. His compositions often present skewed linear perspectives that place the viewer at a remove, above and beyond an unfolding narrative. The romantic natural landscape in Arnold's paintings, in part informed by the work of 19th century German painter Caspar David Friedrich and classic literature, is littered and marred with the abject accumulation of modern cultural detritus. Arnold's work was the subject of a survey exhibition at the Nevada Museum of Art, *On Earth as it is in Heaven* (2010), and was accompanied by a monograph. Next year, Arnold's paintings on the subject of accumulation and dispersal will be featured in a solo exhibition at American University's Katzen Art Center, Washington DC. In 2008, Arnold's work was included in the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art's exhibition which highlighted recipients of the 2005 Eureka Fellowship. Donald Kuspit selected Arnold's work for *New Old Masters* at the National Museum in Gdańsk, Poland in 2006, accompanied by a major catalogue. In 2001, an extensive solo exhibition of Arnold's paintings was presented at the San Jose Museum of Art, also accompanied by a catalogue. Arnold's work is further represented in the public collections of many institutions, including the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the Pasadena Museum of California Art, the Nevada Museum of Art, the di Rosa, the Tacoma Museum of Art, the San Jose Museum of Art, and the Crocker Art Museum. His work has been reviewed in *Artforum*, *Works + Conversation*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*. He lives and works in Sonoma, California, and has been represented by Catharine Clark Gallery since 2003.

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Chester Arnold

San Francisco Chronicle

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

KENNETH BAKER *Galleries*

Mining the artistic life for metaphors

In new work at Catharine Clark's, Sonoma painter Chester Arnold unfurls further his metaphors for the artistic life: prospecting, mining and survivalism.

"60 Years in the Forest" (2012) suggests the self-portrait of a temperament, though not even Arnold's friends will recognize him in the glum figure nursing a campfire — and perhaps some grudges — at the edge of a woodland clearing.

"A Game of Bones" (2012) insinuates a more macabre self-reference with its vision of a miner and his worldly goods reduced to skeletal remains and a dispersed, desert floor still-life: pistol, liquor bottles, pickax, hat, dynamite and whatnot.

"A game of bones" is also a crapshoot, of course, like the making of a painting. Allusions to James Ensor's visionary posthumous self-portraits and to Stéphane Mallarmé, who conceived of a poem as a roll of the dice, clatter out of Arnold's picture.

The specter of Gustave Courbet's still controversial "Origin of the World" (1866) comically haunts some of Arnold's mineshaft pictures. But the largest of them, "Small Time Operation" (2012), confronts us with the abyss — the pit mine as mouth of hell and symbol of greed and ambition digging their



Hosfelt Gallery

Jay DeFeo: Mechanics: Photographs, drawings and photo collage.
Jim Campbell: Screen Obscura: Video. Through Dec. 8. Hosfelt Gallery, 260 Utah St., S.F. (415) 495-5454. www.hosfeltgallery.com.

"Untitled (for B.C.)," 1973-74 photo collage by Jay DeFeo at Hosfelt Gallery.

own grave.

The mine's square spiral of timbers also puts a twist on the perspective construction of spatial illusion that sustained Western painting for 500-odd years.

How much more treasure can that vein still

hold? Arnold seems to ask.

Deep ravines with colorful strata in pictures such as "Grubstake" (2012) and "Blasting" (2012) let Arnold connect with the Western sublime lineage of Thomas Moran (1837-

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE AND SFGATE.COM | Saturday, November 24, 2012 | E3



Catharine Clark Gallery

Chester Arnold: A Pilgrim's Progress: Paintings. Through Jan. 12. Catharine Clark Gallery, 150 Minna St., S.F. (415) 399-1439. www.cclarkgallery.com.

"Small Time Operation," (2012) oil on linen by Chester Arnold, 46 inches by 56 inches.

1926) and make his own sort of stripe paintings along the way.

A muffled lament over art as a wasteful process dovetails in Arnold's work with his long-standing disgust at society's waste mismanagement, explicitly in "The Dump at S-Creek" (2012).

The variety of pictures exhibited once again seems to show Arnold trying his hand at painting whatever comes to mind. Painting hands and minds seldom connect in contemporary art as impressively and divertingly as we see here.

DeFeo sidelight: Anyone impressed by "Jay DeFeo: A Retrospective" at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art will not want to overlook "Jay DeFeo: Mechanics" at Hosfelt.

It consists of drawings and photo collages from the 1970s in which

DeFeo (1929-1989) mused upon bits of mechanism and of human anatomy as though they might be interchangeable. These works have something of the flavor of J.G. Ballard's vision, hinting at prostheses for injuries no one has yet experienced.

That aspect also gives them a creepy, unsought currency. They can make us think of the advances in prosthetic treatment of 21st century war veterans, and a corresponding lag in psychological focus.

Occasionally a DeFeo insinuates a derangement of the senses, as in the one that fits a candlestick telephone with a flame-shaped bulb as a receiver, mounted atop a camera tripod with a side tilt lock.

DeFeo's images frequently owe their power to her dodging our desire and reflexive capacity to name what we see. A different sort of

slackening of words' grip on the visible occurs in two recent pieces at Hosfelt by Jim Campbell. Both use custom electronics to pixelate found black and white home movie footage almost to the point of abstraction.

In their onrushing vagueness, they seem to test the analogy between home movies' banality and memory's dubious truth to the reality of the past, whatever it was.

In "Home Movies (1040-1)" (2008), we can make out passages of pet and child cuteness, car travel and not a little gunplay. Yet the very unknowability of the people involved has a fateful quality: They could have been anyone, and so could we have.

Kenneth Baker is The San Francisco Chronicle's art critic. E-mail: kennethbaker@sfgate.com