

Julie Heffernan

# PENN STATE | NEWS

## ‘When the Water Rises: Recent Paintings by Julie Heffernan’ on display at Palmer

By  
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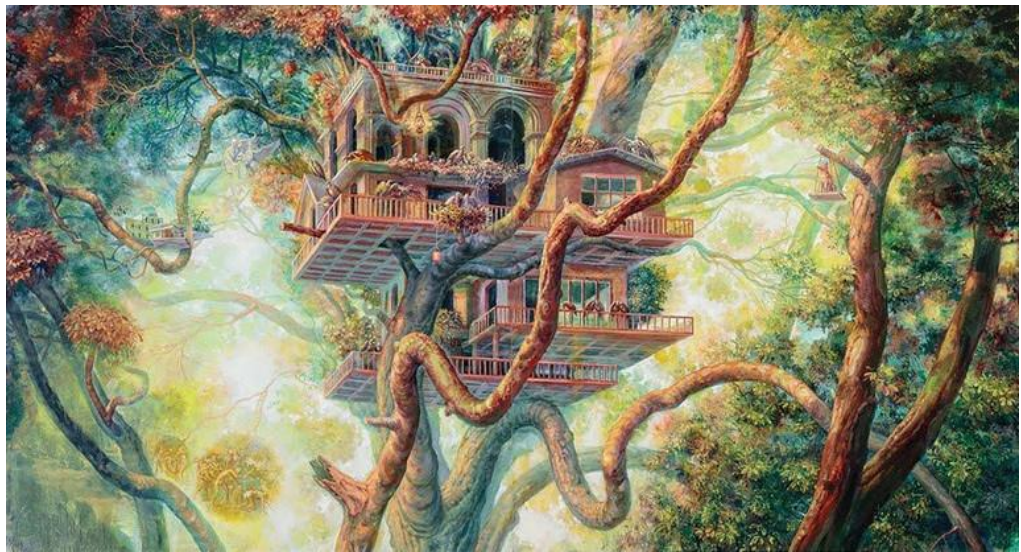
Julie Heffernan, "Self-Portrait as Standing My Ground"

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. — "When the Water Rises: Recent Paintings by Julie Heffernan" is on display July 10 through Sept. 2 at the Palmer Museum of Art at Penn State.

Heffernan's recent paintings explore imaginative scenarios and alternative habitats as her personal response to the threat of environmental disasters. In the wake of recent calamities like Hurricane Katrina and Superstorm Sandy, Heffernan imagines fantastical worlds in trees or on rafts as waters rise across the globe. Topical references to ISIS, Syrian refugees, and the debate

surrounding climate change emerge in the show through 11 monumental canvases. Figures in the works that create, tend and nurture suggest that humans can adapt to a changing environment even as they allude to environmental systems on the verge of collapse.

“Julie's work addresses excess and its relationship to climate change, issues that become more relevant, more pressing, each day,” said Courtney Taylor, original curator of the show at the LSU Museum of Art and the Shaw Center for the Arts. “The beauty of her painting pulls us in to consider these fraught issues, but, in addition to considering these catastrophes and our complicity, we're pushed to consider our response.”



Julie Heffernan, "Sky Burial" (diptych), 2016, oil on canvas, 54x100 inches. Courtesy of Catharine Clark Gallery.

Heffernan's paintings, Taylor said, suggest a response that can be more creative, empathetic and in sync with the larger picture and the environment.

Palmer curator Joyce Robinson agreed.

“Heffernan is a remarkable painter,” Robinson said, “intricately detailed and evoking both frightening allegories of Hieronymus Bosch and sublime vistas of Thomas Cole or Albert Bierstadt.

“We hope visitors in our region and beyond will take advantage of this opportunity to see these provocative works by a major figure in the contemporary art world.”

Heffernan received her master of fine arts in painting from Yale University and a bachelor of fine arts from the University of California, Santa Cruz. Her work is represented in major museum collections, including the Brooklyn Museum, McNay Art Museum, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, and the Palmer Museum of Art. A former professor of painting at Penn State, Heffernan resides in Brooklyn and is a professor of fine arts at Montclair State University.

"When the Water Rises" was organized by the LSU Museum of Art in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalog, which is available for purchase in the Palmer Museum Store.