

Scott Greene



ART PRACTICAL

Shotgun Review

Deep State

August 9, 2015

SF

248 Utah Street
SF, CA 94103
+ 415 399 1439

NY

313 W 14th Street 2F
New York, NY
By appointment only

WEB

www.cclarkgallery.com

In his fourth solo exhibition with Catharine Clark Gallery, Scott Greene presents a series of beautiful, large-scale but tainted paintings. *Deep State* surrounds viewers with realistic yet distorted and illogical depictions of the natural world. Whether on land, at sea, or in the sky, nothing is ordinary. From the pristine simplicity of nature, Greene imagines an alluring reality tarnished by human tendencies.

Immediately upon entering the gallery, one is confronted by *Trading Post* (2015), a painting in which a gigantic pine tree laden with various objects tips into oblivion. The hill on which the tree stood is covered in ropes, cardboard, metals, and heaps of junk. A raccoon clings to the tree for dear life, while the goat in midair appears to be collateral damage, and a person balances precariously near the treetop with pieces of chopped lumber in hand. Though a dire state is depicted, bright, warm colors pervade and challenge the feeling of dread communicated in the narrative. The juxtaposition of humankind and nature in this image, though beautifully rendered, is tragic. The abundance of artificial materials silence nature's beauty.

In frightening and amusing ways, Greene asks viewers to look upon the devastation of a dark, corroded dystopian future in which the natural world is decimated by humankind. In *Trinitas* (2015), three inflatable tube men (of the kind one sees dancing in the wind at used-car lots), dominate a landscape of cloudy smog, fog, and dirt. Uncanny phrases such as "Worship with us" line the sides of the tube men and draw viewers into a hopeless and barren landscape punctuated with the remains of man-made structures, rotten bones, and colored bowling balls. In Greene's paintings, we are our own undoing.



Scott Greene. *Trinitas*, 2015; oil on canvas on panel, 50 x 40 in. Courtesy of the Artist and Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco.

A consistent theme throughout Greene's paintings is "the point of no return." In *Stars'n Tarnation* (2013), plastic trash bags explode from an immense gash in a man's stomach. The man lies bare and immobile while a frail old man attempts to cover up the wound with duct tape. As in *Trinitas*, the surrounding landscape is desolate, save for the trash and human skulls scattered on the ground. The once pure and sublime landscapes are replaced with wastelands littered with evidence of humankind's destructive nature. Deep State speaks to the ongoing environmental goals of drastically reducing carbon-dioxide emissions and eliminating plastic waste, among others. The world Greene depicts signals a catastrophic end that is somewhere between an impending reality and a distorted vision of our future.

Erica Truong was an EHSS Summer 2015 Intern for Art Practical. She lives in the Bay Area and will attend the University of California, Irvine for Business Administration in the Fall of 2015.