



Maggie Mailer

Red State, 2015

Oil on linen

Opening Bid: \$1,000

Artist Statement

I'm writing this statement on November 9, 2016, the day after the Election. This painting, *Red State*, with its strange mixture of Arcadian imagery and bright red soil, suddenly seems uncomfortably relevant. Here is our country, America the Beautiful, with its stars and stripes of blood and anger. How would Grandma Moses paint our landscapes right now? I made the painting in 2015 for a show titled, *Arcadia*, in which I was thinking about the ways we impose, or unleash, ideas upon the natural landscape. I wasn't thinking about politics per se, or Red or Blue States, but when I looked at the painting this morning in the wake of last night's Election, all I could see was the American Flag.

I often begin a painting with an art historical reference, usually 19th-century artists such as Corot or Hiroshige, as a way to entrain myself within the dialogue of landscape painting. The reference offers a platform to explore my ranging attitudes about painting, and to impose a psychological landscape upon the depicted one, or allow one to exist within it. I imagine the painting as a landscape that contains other landscapes, as a painting space that dismantles itself upon viewing.

My approach fluctuates between a delicate depiction of pastoral imagery, and an aggressive, abstract treatment of the canvas. I alternate between the desire to represent a kind of utopian space and the impulse to unleash something freely upon the canvas with a physical, heavy handed relationship to the paint. Delicacy and blunder in the same boat. In some canvases the paint seems to turn against the image it depicts. I can't help but think about how this dynamic mirrors our collaboration with the natural world, a relationship at turns reverent and destructive. I'm interested here in the correlations between the paint's application and our collective attitude towards the environment, towards the landscapes that contain us.