



LIKE A BRAIN SCAN: AMY MYERS ON APRIL GORNIK

My brain puts the paintings of April Gornik together as landscapes; I mean they have all of the obvious indicators of landscape. But, as I dig further, I see repeated complex structural systems, natural forces, phenomena. If you were to look inside your lungs you might see these types of gentle mixtures mixing, fueling, funneling. The viewer breathes with the painting.



Big Storm Light, 2016, Oil on linen, 70 x 77 inches

What I was struck by most when I walked into the Miles McEnery Gallery to see her new works was how the atmosphere of the paintings seemed to extend out into the room itself. I felt like I was actually inside the space they were generating, experiencing the elements not only pictorially, but also physically. I noticed the trees, the light; I felt the wind, the temperatures, the void as the stark absence of light.

As I spent more time with the paintings, other sub-surface content began to percolate. I noticed an upside-down Latin cross repeated in the compositions. I noticed that, subtly, light formed a tentative hidden column in the center of the paintings that was like a ladder you could climb; as though, if you sat there and looked at it long enough, you could step up onto it.

Gornik's paintings always allow access to light. There is never a blockage, an outage, or a shortage of light. It's always accessible, available, impersonal and personal all in the same moment. But it is integrated with other elements. You are always seeing the light through something else, through highly ephemeral, complex forces. Through matter and small pieces of time. You experience the light through cumulus night clouds that gather then disperse within minutes, light ricocheting in groves of trees, creating a glowing luminous presence, soon to be covered by clouds and extinguished. As in quantum mechanics, pieces of time are everything. But the light is never obscured. It lets you in.

In her moonlight paintings, the negative space reads like neurons, like a patterned map or neural synapses. The exquisite pathways and movements look like a brain scan.

April Gornik's work is a visual narrative that transports the viewer through painted light, like taking flight in your dreams. But the transportive power of the light is in counterpoint with the ever present void. You have to be willing to stand within the void to be bejeweled by the light.