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Purple Dreamscape and Soft Green Haze

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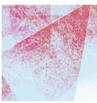
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Abstract:

“Soft Green Haze” and “Purple Dreamscape” are two oil paintings on wood panels by Olivia Ross, a Studio Art student at Montana State University. In creating these two works, Olivia looks to examine how narrative and aesthetic choices draw a viewer into a piece. Olivia removed any indication of a clear narrative or recognizable spaces and instead relies on abstraction to prompt an audience to engage. Olivia found even with the absence of these the viewer is enticed to explore further, not only in physical proximity to the work, but in projecting their own ideas onto it. Olivia thinks that this inclination to create one’s own relationship with a piece when there is no clear narrative to grasp makes a nontangible, abstracted space that’s much more reactively powerful.

Curiositas is an interdisciplinary research journal dedicated to presenting the breadth and depth of undergraduate research that occurs at Montana State University. The journal places a particular emphasis on showcasing overlooked domains of undergraduate research, such as the humanities and arts, alongside traditional scientific research. *Curiositas* is committed to the belief that research on MSU’s campus does not just occur in large laboratories and research groups: it occurs in every discipline and touches every element of scholarship that occurs at MSU. Articles in *Curiositas* are reviewed by a faculty member in the appropriate discipline (where applicable) and by an interdisciplinary undergraduate review committee.



Art

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“Purple Dreamscape” and “Soft Green Haze”

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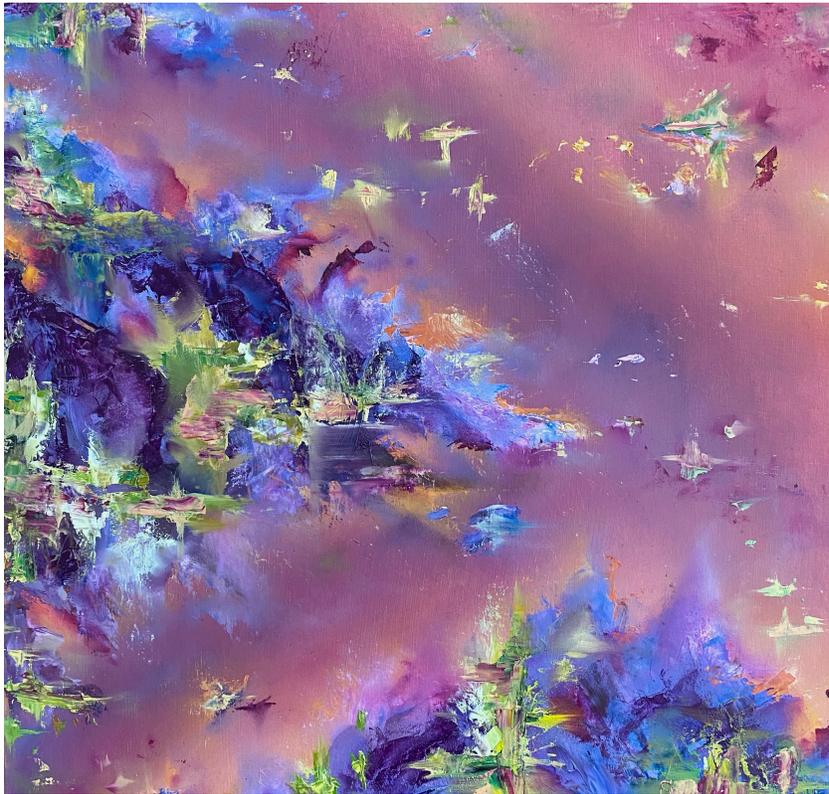
In my work, I like to explore feelings of enticement, specifically through the creation of whimsical landscape paintings.

Within the visual arts, I have found that there is a particular satisfaction which is derived from the voyeuristic elements of more narrative painting styles. As an audience, we really delight in the act of peeking into an individual’s life or the space which they inhabit, sometimes even identifying with a figure or inserting ourselves into their environment. In my pieces, I have leaned into the viewer’s longing which arises at the absence of these voyeuristic elements. I believe that the absence of clear narration within a work, especially in the context of a landscape, prompts the viewer to not just place themselves within the composition, but construct a more personal anecdote in regards to the intention as well as what exactly is being represented within a piece. To further compel this exploration and self-insertion, I often pull artistic inspiration from abstraction and surrealism. I think this makes my pieces a bit more playful and therefore draws more curiosity than a more representational or realistic landscape would.

This particular piece is a wood panel with layers of oil paint. I employed traditional brushes as well as palette knives, sponges, and even crumpled sections of paper dragged across the painting’s surface to create contrasting textural detail and dimension. For the background I primarily used the brushes and sponges and as a result it has a more smoky/hazy effect. This effect mimics that of atmospheric perspective where objects lose clarity as they retreat from our area of focus. More towards the foreground of the piece, I used rougher tools and a much more energetic, quick application to make it feel more sharp and lively. In addition to this, I also mixed the oil paint with a glossy gel medium in different areas to further push certain paint applications towards the foreground of the piece. These contrasting methods and effects bring more visual interest to the piece as well as an interesting duality intended to draw the viewer closer.



Olivia Ross is a Senior at Montana State University studying Studio Art with a focus in painting and ceramics and pursuing a minor in Art History. When she’s not in the studio Olivia is hiking, foraging, and digging up the great wild clay Montana has to offer. After her undergraduate, Olivia hopes to pursue set design and work in collaboration with a creative team.



Purple Dreamscape

Oil Paint on Wood
Olivia Ross, 2021



Soft Green Haze

Oil Paint on Wood
Olivia Ross, 2021