

Landscape, portrait photographs by Emmet Gowin

The photographer Emmet Gowin is justifiably well known for the remarkably frank, and simultaneously mysterious, portraits he took of his wife, Edith Morris, and their family in the 1960s and '70s. His aerial photographs of landscapes ravaged by strip mining and weapons testing, taken over the next two decades, offer a similarly matter-of-fact yet ambiguous view of their subjects, but from a distance. Over the last decade, Gowin has gotten up close and personal again, photographing various species of moths in Panama and South America alone, during the day, and as they flit around Edith at night, creating ribbons of light in the dark. "Emmet Gowin," at Swarthmore College's List Gallery, brings these diverse interests together in a memorably beautiful exhibition.

Gowin's aerial landscapes have the large front gallery to themselves. At first, it's easy to mistake these images of human industry as seen from a great distance for things they are not — and sometimes the things you initially think you recognize are more disturbing and surreal than the embattled landscape they portray.

The image presented in *Aeration Pond, Toxic Water Treatment Facility, Pine Bluff Arkansas*, 1989 could pass for a roasting pan with rows of disembodied human breasts floating in it. And his *Mining Exploration, Near Silver City, Nevada*, 1988 could be a close-up of a nude female torso slashed in patterns with a knife. One assumes Gowin saw these human features, or human characteristics like them, through his lens when he took these unsettling pictures. Seeing all of these land-



Emmet Gowin's photograph "Edith, Christmas, Danville, Virginia, 1971," at Swarthmore College's List Gallery through April 1.

scapes from above, and as toned silver gelatin prints, heightens their resemblance to the human body.

The smaller back gallery complements the intimate nature of Gowin's portraits. (There are a few early landscapes here, too, but they were shot from the ground, at eye level, and are as personal as his portraits.)

Here are those classic Gowin photographs of Edith as a young woman, alone and with her sister and her children; of children at play, and of others who lived in close proximity to the Gowin family when they lived in Danville, Va., where Gowin was born in 1941. In all of these images, as in his later aerial photographs, things are often not what they first appear to be.

Just when you think Gowin's recent portraits of Edith with moths are career anomalies, you see that they, too, embody some aspects of the

works that preceded them (they're black-and-white, his wife is again the model, they have a lovely mysterious quality), but that there also is something distinctly different about them. Here, the natural world is experienced in pure, unadulterated rapture.

List Gallery, Swarthmore College, 500 College Ave., Swarthmore. Noon to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays. 610-328-7811 or www.swarthmore.edu/Humanities/art/Gallery. Through April 1.

Granular ...

Mia Rosenthal and Sharka Hyland are well-paired in their first solo shows at Gallery Joe. Rosenthal's ink drawings of flora and fauna are a homage to the Hudson River School painters; Hyland's pencil drawings pay tribute to the written words of Flaubert, Tolstoy, Dickens, and Nabok-

ov.

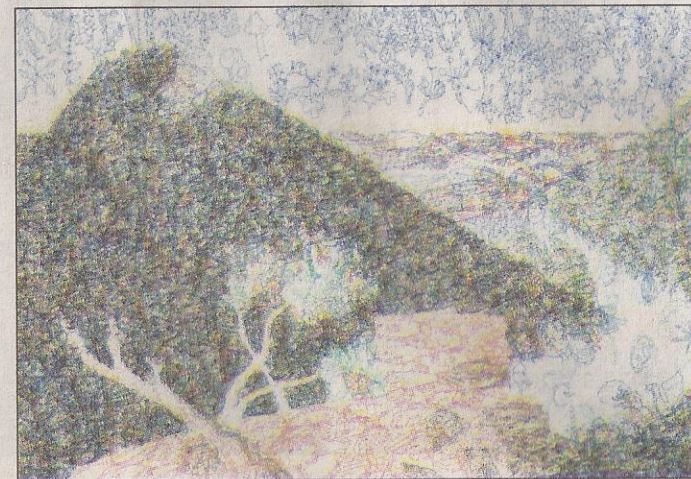
Each of Rosenthal's landscape images is constructed from hundreds of her tiny drawings of animals and plants found in the Hudson River Valley, which she based on images she found on Internet sites, such as that of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Conservation Library. In *After Cole: Sunny Morning on the Hudson River*, for example, her Hudson teems with all the fish and amphibians that currently swim in its waters; a tree in the foreground is composed of local birds, and the mountain is an aggregation of raccoons, deer, squirrels, and other local critters. I see a New Yorker cover in Rosenthal's future.

Hyland's small drawings of passages from great works of literature are in the gallery's cool, windowless Vault space, which adds a momentous character to most of the works installed there. But Hyland's drawings are naturally grave and weighty, even at their tiny scale. Her point in copying the words of Nabokov et al is to show that there are instances of writing in which images are so perfectly described in words that another medium of expression will never do them justice. Reading, and just looking at, Hyland's perfectly copied passages offers proof.

Gallery Joe, 302 Arch St., noon to 5:30 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays. 215-592-7752 or www.galleryjoe.com. Through April 14.

... and grand

Rebecca Saylor Sack's lush new oil paintings at Seraphin Gallery make up an impres-



Mia Rosenthal's "After Cole: Sunny Morning on the Hudson River," ink and pencil drawing, at Gallery Joe through April 14.



Rebecca Saylor Sack's "coldhands," 2011, oil on canvas, at Seraphin Gallery through March 25.

sively cohesive body of work — and they're exciting individually, too. Two monumentally scaled works, *coldhands* and *Thunder splits the rift where the sun comes in*, display her at her best, moving from passage to passage with abandon and control, conjuring natural events in all their natural grandiosity.

A quibble: I would not have included the small framed paintings on canvas in this show; they lack the volatility of her larger works.

Seraphin Gallery, 1108 Pine St., 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesdays through Sundays. 215-923-7000 or www.seraphingallery.com. Through March 25.