

David Ebony's Top 10 New York Gallery Shows for September

Monday, September 22, 2014



Lisa Mackie, *Earth/River* (2014)

Photo courtesy of June Kelly

Lisa Mackie at June Kelly, through September 30

Detroit-born New York artist Lisa Mackie is basically a storyteller. The simple tales she conjures act as springboards, allowing her imagination to run free in a wide array of abstract and figurative compositions. She employs an impressive range of mediums and materials, from acrylic-on-silk paintings and resin sculptures, to photography and video projections. In one of her earlier exhibitions, the works centered on the story of a woman who falls to earth. "Earth/River," the current show of recent works, focuses on a personal exploration of nature. Technically complex yet thematically and visually cohesive, the exhibition offers a quietly immersive experience.

Like most stories, "Earth/River" starts with a book. This one, displayed on a long wood table at one end of the gallery, is more like a handheld assemblage, encrusted with 3-D elements and with some pages caked with thick pigment. Cotton gloves are provided for viewers to peruse the precariously constructed tome. Some pages contain photo images of trees and others feature hand-painted calligraphic texts that hint at a diaristic purpose.

The rich textures and images in the book reappear throughout the show, and a similar cacophony of color permeates the space. A group of large, unstretched paintings features abstract passages that suggest landscape by means of brushwork pulsating in nearly psychedelic hues. Sculptures of purple and green glittering boulders placed on the floor are unlike any rocks I have ever seen. Yet, "Earth/River" is a convincing meditation on nature and a well-realized homage to all its crazy beauty.