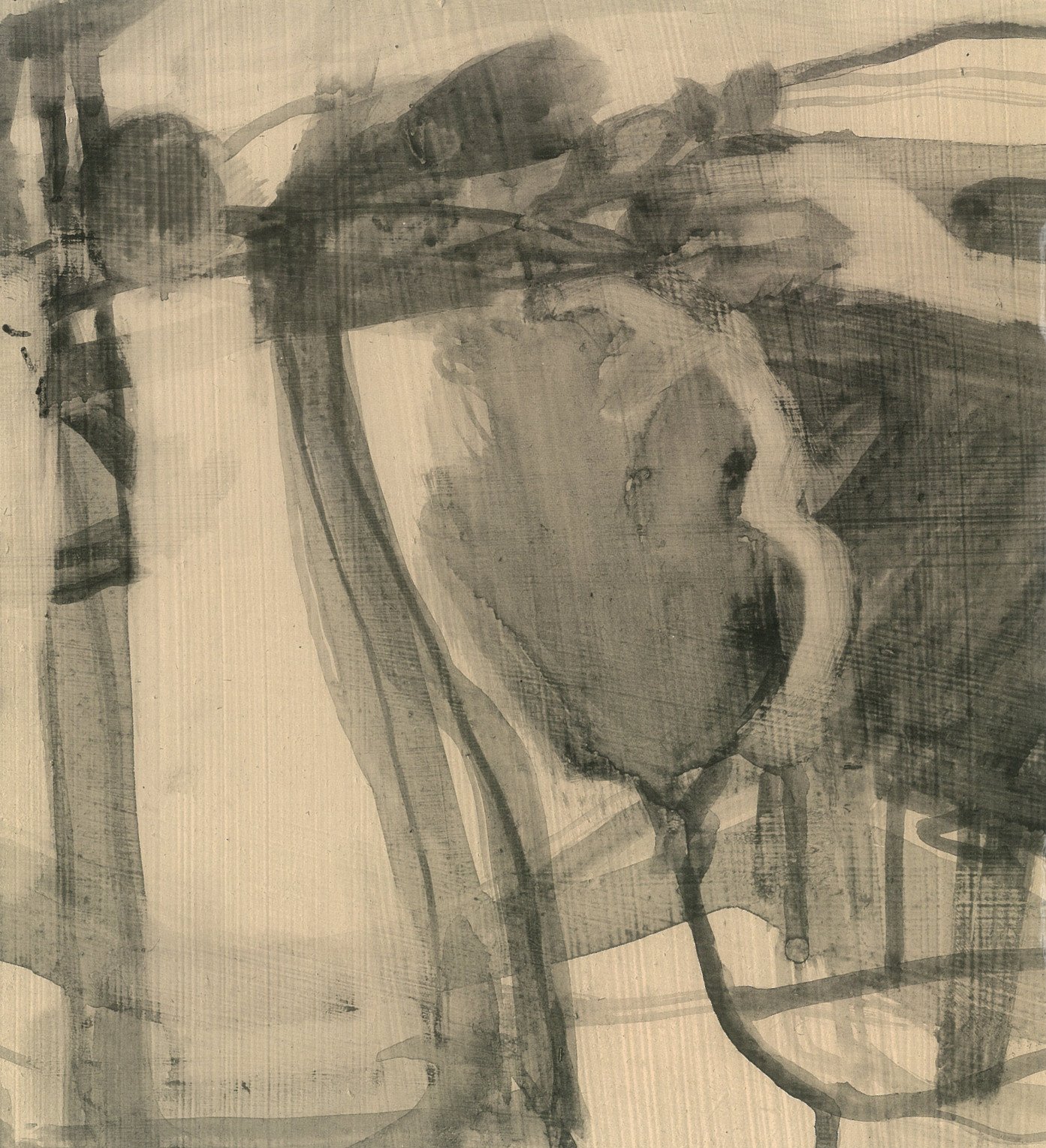


JULIAN HATTON



Elizabeth Harris Gallery

529 WEST 20 ST NEW YORK, NY 10011

212-463-9666 FAX 212-463-9403

OCTOBER 10 - NOVEMBER 9, 2002

J U L I A N H A T T O N

AN INSURPASSABLE PLENITUDE

Joel Silverstein

“But what motivates the painter’s movement can never simply be perspective or geometry or the laws governing color, or, for that matter, particular knowledge. Motivating all the movements from which a picture gradually emerges there can only be one thing: the landscape in its totality and in its absolute fullness . . .”¹

The paintings of Julian Hatton offer subtle pleasures in a time of marked contradiction. Much contemporary discourse sees nature as an extension of man’s interference, or merely a convenient linguistic construct. Hatton approaches the natural world as an external reality limned with the force of creation, its very alterity revealing lessons to be read through active engagement. Quietude, a hush of observation bridges artistic practice to reflection, the known to the unknown. Initial impressions are recorded through numerous studies, watercolors and small oils on site. Contrasting this procedure, he superimposes graphic elements derived from the landscape, boldly integrating them in the studio. The results stylistically differ from either realism or formalist abstraction. A battle is waged between perceptual mimesis and the willful deformation of nature, linking us

to earlier forms of high Modernist innovation. If Cézanne, as Merleau-Ponty pointed out, painted before Nature and Pollock personified it as himself, then Hatton paints after it, an abstract continuum evolving as his ongoing metanarrative.

Pictorial elements are stretched to the confines of a traditional vanishing point, even as competing systems of perspective mark a single work. In *Dowser*, 2001–02, and *Suitcase*, 2001–02, hills, lines of trees, and bodies of water begin to cohere in deep recessional space. Conversely, crops of shape lie in shallow overlapping recession, rocks or tangled foliage juggled in mute projection recalling Chinese scroll painting or Matissean still life. These spatial disparities contribute to an air of Lilliputian or Brobdingagian proportion, where zones of pictorial organization are tossed about like children’s blocks. The urge to penetrate the furthest recess of the horizon belies a nagging force ever pushing you to the surface. A benign, playful, yet somewhat savage animism reigns as nature’s beneficence retains an echo of its cruelty. Kind and even wondrous, its essential anthropomorphism is the source of all mystery.

Cover: *Suitcase*, 2000–01
Oil on canvas, 44 x 78 inches

The deification of nature reached culmination during the Romantic Movement and subsequent historical affinities. This great Northern European tradition encompasses Caspar David Friedrich, J.M.W. Turner, John Constable, Samuel Palmer, as well as the Americans Arthur Dove, Marsden Hartley and Milton Avery. Pantheistic ideas formed the core of their inspiration. The natural world doubles as the physical embodiment of the Godhead, merging aspects of nascent abstraction with formal aspects of figurative illusionism. A new category of religious impulse found expression within art, coexisting for a time with secular Modernism. Hatton has an affinity for this concept, but his historical belatedness, as well as his artistic personality modifies its impact. The Sublime remains articulated by the artist /seer as divined by intuition, but the limits of our postmodern skins and the stunted sense of our own longing becomes achingly apparent.

Color is a revelation in Hatton's work, properly unified to shape. A careful student of such masters as Matisse, Miro, Soutine and Hofmann, the artist's vivid chroma constantly reasserts the artificial reordering of nature as an emotional category of expression. In *Beanbag*, 2001–02, percussive geological forms double as musical instruments, or tropical fruit. The heaviness of a cobalt blue suggestive of

running water leaps triumphantly into the sky. *Jack Pines on Naphthol*, in a painting of that title, 2001–02, rest on a field of synthetic naphthol and mustard yellow. Vaporous atmosphere is cogently solidified into ovals and root shapes of great precision.

Dictated by the mingling of other senses such as touch and taste, expectation is successfully reordered. Richard Wollheim² remarked that de Kooning crammed his pictures with infantile experiences, like sucking, biting, excreting, retaining, sniffing, swallowing, gurgling, stroking and wetting. While Wollheim emphasizes the essentially regressive and savage psychoanalytic qualities of de Kooning's oeuvre, Hatton also depicts this early stage of development, although in different terms. Hatton's universe is one of plenitude and luminosity, constituting a lip smacking ripeness literally good enough to eat. In psychological terms, the Oral Stage represents the infant exploring the world through his or her mouth. Art encourages the use of memory traces put to new service. The image of the overflowing breast and the recognition of the mother's face are a primary psychological inspiration for landscape's aesthetic symbolism, the experience of merging with the world and losing oneself. Hatton avoids the clichés of instinctual life such as simple sentimentality, or the fulfill-

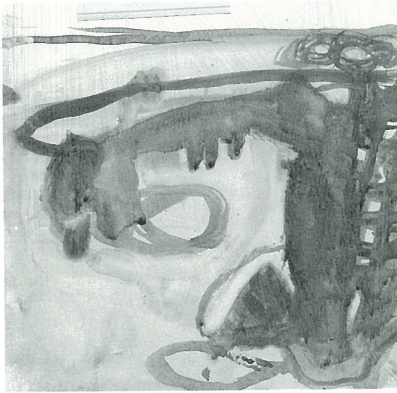
ment of want through reconciliation, by insisting on certain oddness within his planar juxtapositions. The essential dislocation of friendly nature is the deformation of the all-giving mother, made mysterious and impractical for conventional relationship. Hatton's world, theoretically, cannot be surveyed or even transversed. The integration of place and abstraction frees up association through an inherent alienation mixed with awe, made sacred as in the best of Modernist and archaic traditions. As subliminal subversions go, these paintings carry a charge behind all the sweetness, the richness of experience as an ongoing project.

In "Cézanne's Doubt," the French Phenomenologist, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, invokes Cézanne as wedded to a primordial reality, enabling the artist to constitute perspective as a lived experience rather than an academic or photographic one. The multiple contours of objects within his oeuvre contribute to their sense of plenitude, where touch and even taste merge with vision. Merleau-Ponty claims that Cézanne's aim was that of visual convergence, just before a scene organizes itself in the viewer's eye. The historical, social and psychological ramifications imply a painted subject existing in an a priori state, before the inherent split with the object, the viewer with the viewed and the thing with the idea.

"Cézanne's Doubt" is a concept postulated by the artist's own comments, referring to his perceived insufficiency of means and the impossibility of his goals. Thus Cézanne was caught in a web of incompleteness and tragedy, apparent to many of his peers. Of course from our point of view, these are merely the prerequisites of modern life. Like Cézanne, Hatton is striving for that point of reconfiguration and convergence, before the thing can be named, rife with utopian possibilities. If this represents an inherent contradiction, a noble but doomed preoccupation, I would submit it is such a project our time sorely lacks. As Cézanne represents the problems of the first word, then it is Hatton, on the cusp of post-modernism, who represents the problems of the last. Luckily the nature of his work, keen, life-affirming and resolutely steadfast, continues to inspire.

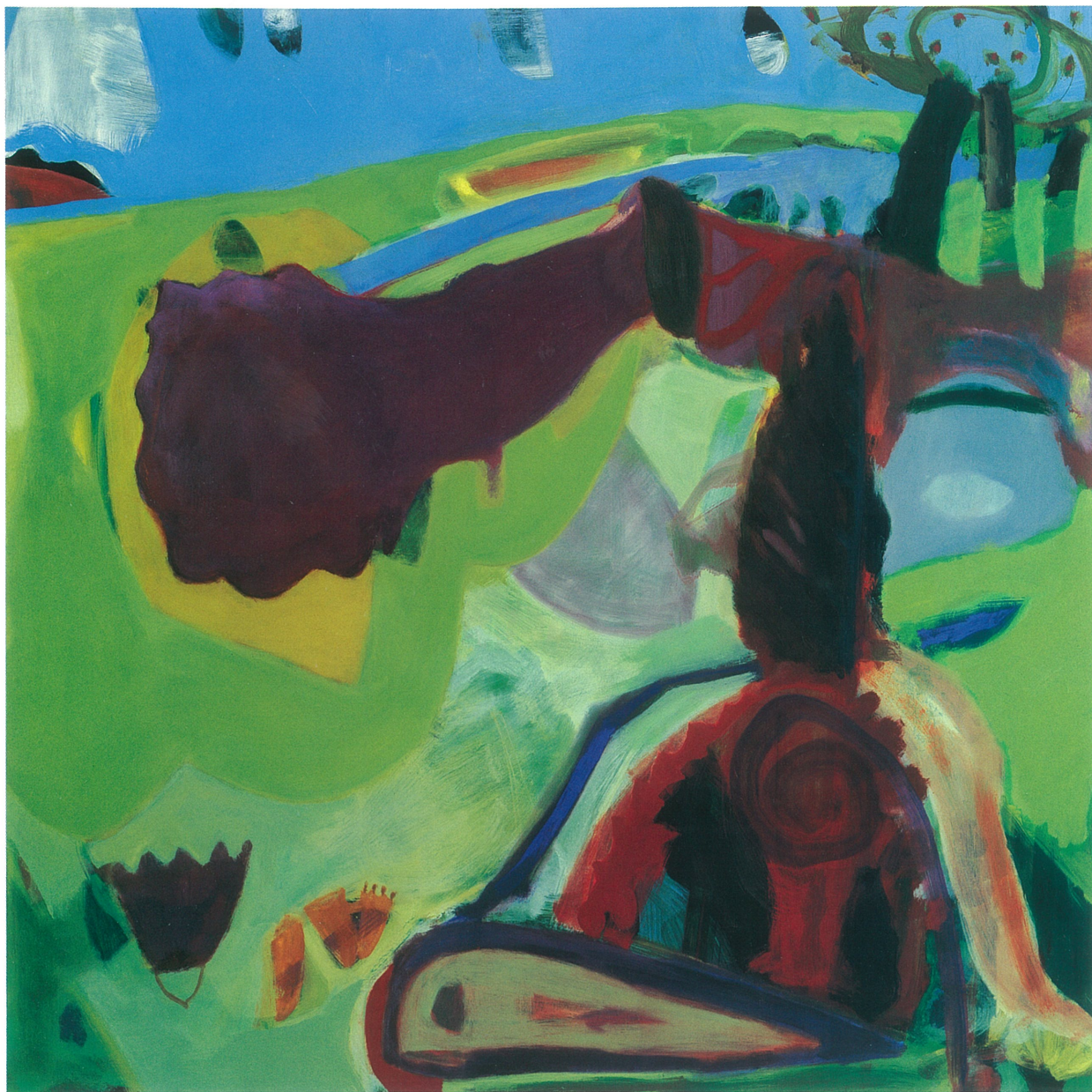
- 1 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's Doubt," p. 17. *Sense and Non-sense*, U.S.A., Northwestern University Press: 1971
- 2 Richard Wollheim, *Painting as an Art*, p. 348. Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press: 1984





Studies for *Conveyor Belt*, 2001–02
Gouache on board, approx. 4 x 5 inches

Conveyor Belt, 2001–02
Oil on canvas, 48 x 48 inches

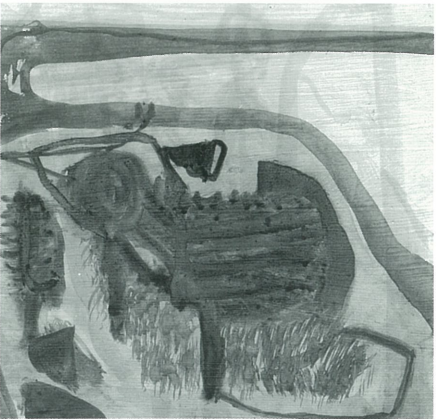
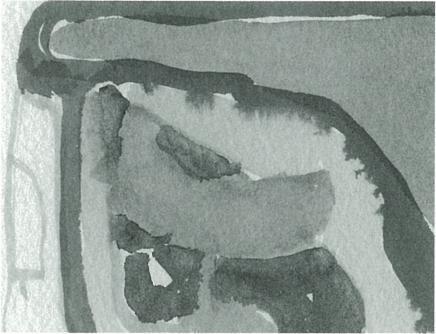




Studies for *Tweezers*, 2002
Gouache on paper, 4 x 6 inches

Tweezers, 2001–02
Oil on canvas, 36 x 48 inches

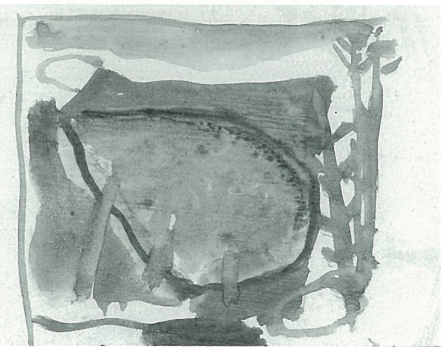




Studies for *Bean Bag*, 2002
Gouache on paper or board,
approx. 6 x 8 inches

Bean Bag, 2001-02
Oil on canvas, 60 x 60 inches

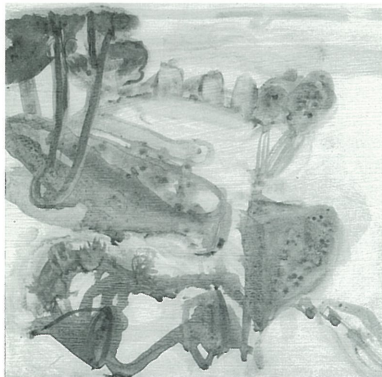




Studies for *Boxing*, 2002
Gouache on board, approx. 3 x 3 inches

Boxing, 2001-02
Oil on canvas, 48 x 48 inches





Studies for *Dowser*, 2002
Gouache on paper or board,
approx. 3 x 5 inches

Dowser, 2001–02
Oil on canvas, 60 x 56 inches





Studies for *Middle Mist*, 2002
Gouache on paper, approx. 3 x 5 inches

Middle Mist, 2001–02
Oil on canvas, 48 x 62 inches





Study for *Maypole*, 2001
Gouache on paper, 5 x 3 inches

Maypole, 2001
Oil on canvas, 30 x 30 inches



JULIAN HATTON

Born 1956 Grand Haven, Michigan

EDUCATION

1980–82

New York Studio School of Drawing,
Painting, and Sculpture

1979

Harvard College, BA in Art History

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2002

Elizabeth Harris Gallery, New York, NY
(catalogue)

2001

Elizabeth Harris Gallery, New York, NY
(catalogue)

1999

Elizabeth Harris Gallery, New York, NY
1997

Kara Wharton & Wharton Ltd, Dallas, TX
1996

Elizabeth Harris Gallery, New York, NY
1995

The List Gallery, Swarthmore College, PA
1994

Elizabeth Harris Gallery, New York, NY
1988

The Connecticut Gallery, Marlborough, CT

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2002

New York Studio School Alumni Exhibiton,
Frederieke Taylor Gallery, New York, NY

2002

Curious Terrain, Elizabeth Harris Gallery,
New York, NY

2000

On The City: Urban Realities and Fantasies,
New York Studio School of Drawing,
Painting and Sculpture, curated by Irving
Sandler, New York, NY

1997

Winter Group Show, R. B. Stevenson
Gallery, La Jolla, CA

Parallel Universes, Eighth Floor Gallery,
New York, NY

Alive and Well—New Painting, Elizabeth
Harris Gallery, New York, NY

Field of Vision, Kendall Art and Design,
Hudson, NY

Summer Salon, Robert Clements Gallery,
Portland, ME

1995

The Nature of Landscape, The Gallery at
Hastings-on-Hudson, NY

American Painters and French Sculptors,
Museum at Rochefort-en-Terre, Brittany,
France

1994

Landscape Seen and Remembered,
Organization of Independent Artists,
New York, NY (catalogue)

1993

Introductions, Campbell-Theibaud Gallery,
San Francisco, CA

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

2002

Ken Johnson, *The New York Times*,
Art Guide, January 18, p. E41.

2001

Joel Silverstein, *Reviewny.com*, "Julian
Hatton—Curious Terrain", exhibition
review, April 1, (illustrations).

2001

Joseph Valentini, *Abstract Art Online*,
exhibition review, March 20,
(illustrations).

1999

Cathy Lebowitz, *Art in America*, "Julian
Hatton at Elizabeth Harris," November,
p. 146, (illustration).

Karen Wilkin, *Partisan Review*, "At the Gal-
leries," Summer, p. 489–90.

Robert G. Edelman, *Cover*, "Theme and
Variation—the Improvisational Landscape,"
May, p. 13, (illustration).

Ken Johnson, *The New York Times*,
"Review," April 9, p. E41.

Kalm, *NY Arts*, "Gallery Walk," March,
p. 40, (illustration).

1998

David Ebony, "De le terre: Graham Suther-
land," catalogue essay, *Sutherland, Une
Retrospective*, Musée Picasso Antibes,
p. 115.

Karen Wilkin, *Partisan Review*, "At the
Galleries," Winter, p. 124.

1996

David Ebony, "David Ebony's New York Top
Ten: Julian Hatton at Elizabeth Harris,"
www.artnet.com (on-line magazine),
November 26, (illustrated).

Jeanne C. Wilkinson, "Julian Hatton,"
Review, December 1, p. 26.

1995

Victoria Donahue, "Julian Hatton at
Swarthmore," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*,
November 12, p. MD8.

Vivien Raynor, "One Man's Muted Land-
scapes and Those of 14 Other Artists,"
The New York Times, November 5, p. 18.

David Ebony, "Julian Hatton," *Art in
America*, May, pp. 116–7, (illustration).

1993

Jude Schwendenwien, "Four Views that
Connect at Paesaggio," *The Hartford
Courant*, August 1, p. G6.

1992

Laurie Schrieber, "From Sensuality to
Dreams at the West Side," *The Bar
Harbor Times*, July 2, pp. C4-C5,
(illustration).

1990

Vivien Raynor, "Full House at Gallery in
Marlborough," *The New York Times*,
June 17.

AWARDS, RESIDENCIES, FELLOWSHIPS

2001

Pollock-Krasner Grant in Painting

1998

New York Foundation for the Arts
Fellowship in Painting

1995

Rochefort-en-terre Artist Residency
Fellowship, Brittany, France.

1993


National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship
Grant in Painting.

1992

MacDowell Residency Fellowship.

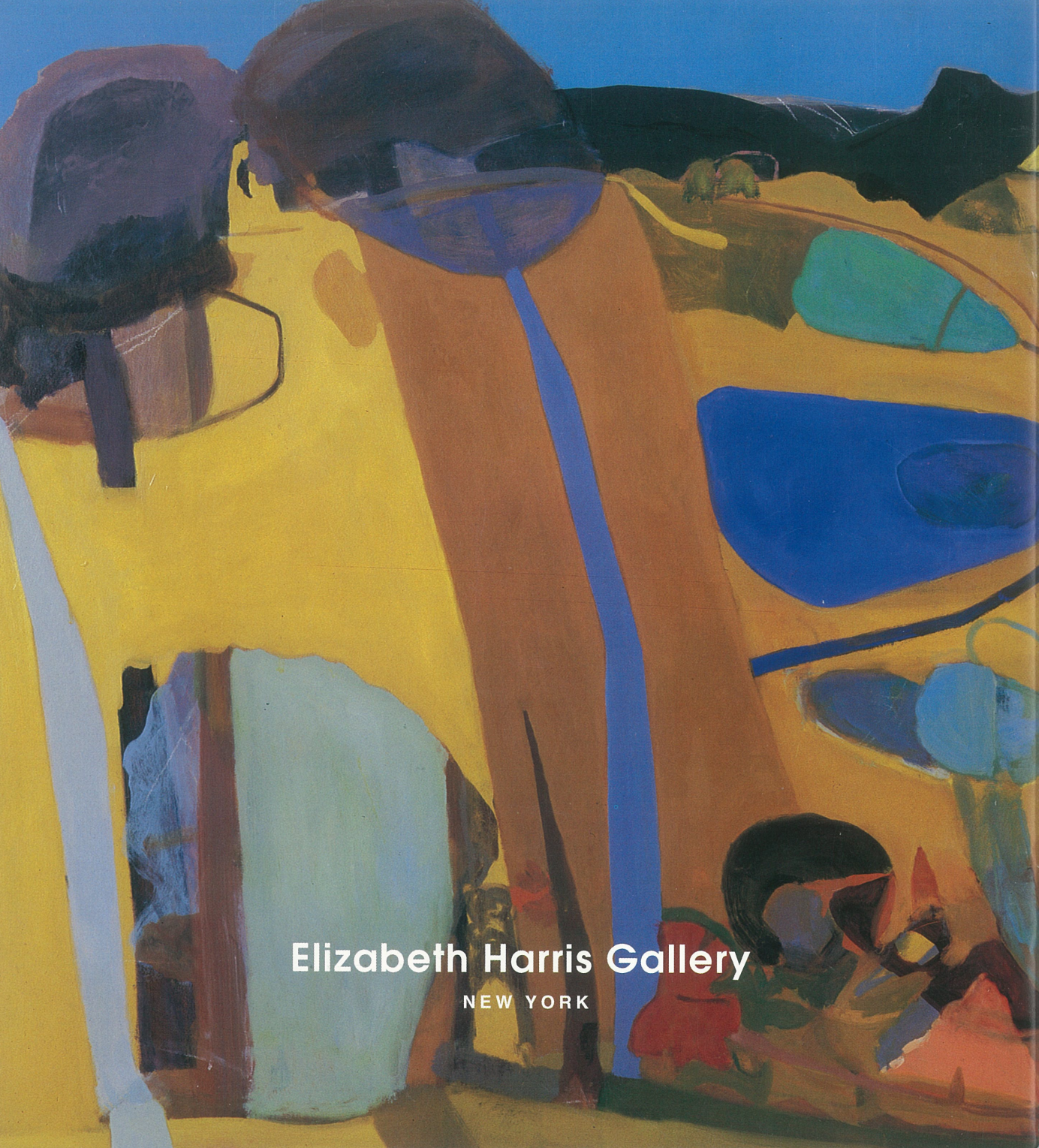
PUBLIC COLLECTION

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



Once again, thanks to
Elizabeth and Bill, Larry
Sunden, my friends and
most of all, Alison.

J.H.



Elizabeth Harris Gallery
NEW YORK