

NICELLE BEAUCHENE GALLERY

Louisa Matthíasdóttir

Six Landscapes

August 22 – September 27, 2020 | Online

Nicelle Beauchene is pleased to present an exhibition of paintings by Louisa Matthíasdóttir (1917-2000) in the gallery's online viewing room.

Born in Reykjavík, Iceland in 1917, Louisa Matthíasdóttir studied in Copenhagen and Paris during the 1930s. Her early paintings from this period established her as a leading figure in the Icelandic avant-garde community. In 1942, the artist moved to New York City, briefly studying at the Art Student's League before attending the Hans Hofmann School of Fine Arts. Along with fellow students including Leland Bell (whom she married in 1944), Robert de Niro, Sr., Larry Rivers, Nell Blaine, and Jane Freilicher, Matthíasdóttir helped foster a reemerging relevance for representational painting as synthesized from the teachings of abstraction.

Matthíasdóttir is regarded for her colorful oil on canvas and watercolor paintings that most often depict the Icelandic countryside and coastline towns. In quick, flat brushstrokes, the artist renders arresting idylls of her homeland that, while quiet and to the point, are equally enigmatic in their apparent simplicity.

The largest painting on view, *Five Sheep* (1990), epitomizes Matthíasdóttir's vision; here, a far-reaching vista is broken up into distinct registers of simple shapes and colors. Commanding the foreground are five burly silhouettes, seemingly carved from of the green hillsides with the geometric immediacy of their forms.

Louisa Matthíasdóttir (1917-2000) was born in Reykjavík, Iceland and lived most of her life in New York. Her work has been exhibited widely in solo and group presentations across the United States and Europe, including a number of touring career retrospectives and the 1973 Whitney Biennial.

Her works can be found in the public collections of the National Gallery of Iceland, Reykjavík, IS; Tate, London, UK; Museo Rufino Tamayo, Mexico City, MX; Hirshhorn Museum and The National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C.; Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL; Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, TX; Portland Museum of Art, Portland, ME, among others. She was the recipient of the American-Scandinavian Foundation's Culture Award, the Knight's Cross of the Icelandic Order of the Falcon, and was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1998.

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