

Kaarlo Stauffer

Oct 18–Nov 17, 2024

**Kaarlo Stauffer** is known for his collage-like paintings based on old family photographs, but a new departure is evident in his *Adventure* exhibition, which has seen him abandon family albums in favour of more reductive, intense palette and a newfound focus on the medium of painting as its own one-of-a-kind language of visual narration.

Collecting and recycling of source materials nevertheless remains an integral part of Stauffer's artistic process. Among the sources for his latest exhibition are his own recently rediscovered childhood drawings. In his own words, Stauffer has always found it difficult to come up with "anything terribly exciting out of his head" – he finds it easier to begin his process by collecting material and piecing together accumulated sources on his worktable.

Mysterious islands, caves, castles, seascapes and other familiar elements from classic adventure stories recur in many paintings in the *Adventure* exhibition. Also present are references to Romantic and Gothic art, as are allusions to literature and philosophy. Human figures no longer occupy a central place as prominently as they did in his earlier work. Many of his new paintings unfold unassumingly as landscapes quietly beckoning the viewer on an adventure.

There is an element of mystery and lingering contemplativeness to Stauffer's new paintings. They seem to question exactly what constitutes an adventure, and whether an adventure should always entail heroism and bravery. Traditionally, an adventure is an epic, sublime, and grand event, but even a smaller, simpler experience can elicit a tingling sense of adventure. All it takes is an irresistible sense of mystery, which might arise from an unusual encounter with an animal, the pale glow of the moon, or a dark forest – a strange or fascinating observation or inexplicable enigma that begs to be unravelled.

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