



EVENTS

ARTIST TALK: RICCARDA DE ECCHER

Saturday, August 26, 2:00 PM

Free and open to the public

HALSEY TALKS: THE LANDSCAPE AS ART

Monday, September 18, 6:30 PM

Free and open to the public

CURATOR-LED EXHIBITION TOUR FOR MEMBERS

Thursday, October 5, 6:00 PM

Open to all members

Inside panel: *Torre Fanis*, 2017. Top cover: *Marmolada*, 2015. Bottom cover: *Caino e Abele* (detail), 2017.

LOCATION:

The Marion and Wayland H. Cato Jr. Center for the Arts
College of Charleston
161 Calhoun Street, Charleston, SC 29401
halsey.cofc.edu

PARKING:

Available in the St. Philip St. and George St. garages

GALLERY HOURS:

Monday – Saturday, 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Open until 7:00 PM on Thursdays
during exhibitions, or by appointment
Free Admission

CONTACT:

(843) 953-4422 or halsey@cofc.edu

BLOG:

Join the conversation! halsey.cofc.edu/edu/blog

GUIDED GROUP TOURS BY APPOINTMENT:


Free tours are led by knowledgeable and experienced guides
and can be adapted to various time lengths, group sizes, and ages.
Contact Lizz Biswell at BiswellL@cofc.edu or call (843) 953-5659.

MISSION:

The Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art at the College of Charleston School of the Arts provides a multidisciplinary laboratory for the production, presentation, interpretation, and dissemination of ideas by innovative visual artists from around the world. As a non-collecting museum, we create meaningful interactions between adventurous artists and diverse communities within a context that emphasizes the historical, social, and cultural importance of the art of our time.

 HALSEY INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART

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#MontagnaDeEccher



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Riccarda de Eccher: Montagna

August 25 – October 7, 2017



Riccarda de Eccher was born in Bolzano and grew up in Udine, Italy. Her work has been featured at the Casa Cavazzini Museo d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Udine, Italy; Galleria d'Arte Moderna Enrico de Cillia, Treppo Carnico, Italy; Gallery ArtCube, Paris, France; and the Sala delle Esposizioni, Bolzano, Italy, among others. She lives and works in Long Island, New York.



Tofane, 2017

Riccarda de Eccher: Montagna

By Bryan Granger

Despite their awe-inspiring natural beauty, mountains are inhospitable places. Even though small populations of people live in the Himalayas, Andes, and the Ethiopian Highlands, mountainous areas are generally detrimental to the flourishing of civilization. In higher elevations, there is less oxygen and a greater risk of crop failure. While mountains have existed as symbols of strength and fortitude, they have also shaken societal worldviews.

In the early seventeenth century, Galileo Galilei turned his new telescope toward the surface of the moon. By noticing the uneven path of sunlight as it traveled across the lunar landscape, he discovered the surface of the moon was indeed mountainous. Such a finding was incongruous with the popular belief in Galileo's time that the sun, moon, and other planets were perfectly spherical. Galileo's finding, along with his other research, created cracks in overarching theories about the creation and operation of the universe.



Creta della Chianevate, 2015.

The watercolors of Riccarda de Eccher examine mountainous landforms through the artist's own biographical lens. Her interest in mountains stems from growing up in the Dolomites, a mountain range in northern Italy that form a southern extension of the Alps. Learning to hike and climb, she became an avid



Creta della Chianevate, 2015

relationship with the landforms. While she grew up on and around mountains, she did not start creating art until she was in her forties. She says, the impetus to begin drawing and painting came from her desire to understand the flora that she encountered while hiking. In an effort to understand these details better, she depicted them on paper with either graphite or watercolor. It is perhaps fitting then that her recent watercolors of massive mountain forms have their origins in drawings of much smaller details in the mountain landscape.

The artist's laborious watercolors also stand in stark contrast to the prevalence of digital images of natural settings, images that are readily available and often shared on the internet. With the internet, it is easy enough to find visually spectacular images of jagged crags in the Dolomites, among other wonderful natural vistas. The abundance of such images has a flattening effect, however, removing such peaks from their natural context and into one that is exactly 3840 by 2160 pixels. De Eccher's watercolors reject this process.

Instead, paintings such as the monumental *Bivera*, 2016, provide a detailed look at a specific peak. When divorced from their surroundings, the harsh facades of the rocks speak to the artist's experience as a mountain climber. Covered in snow, segments of the crests disappear into the dull sky in the background. The titular mountain peak *Torre Fanis*, 2017, (inside cover) appears to be floating in space due to its snowy banks and its placement in the composition.



Bivera, 2016

mountaineer. Eventually she would go on to climb several of the world's most prominent peaks, including Mount Everest in 1980.

De Eccher's watercolors focus on traditional representations of mountains—snowcapped peaks jutting skyward amid the clouds. They are explorations of the aesthetic appeal of mountains, but they are also meditations on her own



Pisciadù, 2015

De Eccher often defines the mountains in her works not by their jagged edges but by the shadows cast into the craggy grooves of the rock faces.

At times, the artist's depictions tilt toward the abstract. *Pisciadù*, 2015, for instance, shows a closely cropped group of rocks jutting upward into the sun-filled sky. The edges in this painting are less crisp than in *Bivera*, alluding to a method of rendering atmospheric perspective developed by Renaissance painters to signify objects in the picture plane that were farther away than others. Objects executed in this *sfumato* technique would thus appear slightly blurrier. De Eccher's use of it here works paradoxically—the scale and composition of the image show the monumentality of the mountain peaks while the atmospheric perspective suggests a great distance between the viewer and rock.

De Eccher imbues her paintings with her experiences as a hiker and mountaineer. Her desire to understand the world around her informs her watercolors, which in turn help us to better grasp such landforms that are already ubiquitous in digital images. Simultaneously idiosyncratic and widely recognizable, her paintings of mountains offer sincere meditations on not only the landscapes portrayed, but also society's connections to the world in which we live.



Gusela, 2017

Bryan Granger is Manager of Exhibitions and Public Programs at the Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art.