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“Natural Renditions” at Marlborough Chelsea  
By: Simmy Swinder



*Installation view of “Natural Renditions.” Courtesy Marlborough Chelsea, New York, NY.*

Natural Renditions at Marlborough Gallery’s downtown Chelsea space is a refreshing alternative to the gallery’s more traditional blue-chip-exclusive exhibitions. Diana Campbell and Marlborough director Eric Gleason co-curated this summer group show comprising twenty-two contemporary artists. The two teamed up to juxtapose artworks that render natural elements through various media: landscape paintings, collage, and sculptural forms made from or to mimic flora, both realistically and in the abstract.

The exhibition consists of both up-and-coming art stars, such as Marlborough artists Steven Charles and Will Ryman, as well as relative unknowns like Amit Greenberg, a first-year art school student who was also included in Diana Campbell’s recent pop-up exhibition, *Pretty Young Things*. Other artists who fit seamlessly into the show’s curatorial theme are Kent Henriksen, Vlatka Horvat, and Valerie Hegarty.

The exhibition covers Marlborough’s first and second floors. The first floor is split into three rooms. In the first room, which faces the street, is a painting by artist Kim Dorland. Its thick globs of paint semi-abstractly depict a wild wood. Right next to it is a small pseudo-pointillist painting by Steven Charles. The verticality in the composition and subject matter of both the paintings make their proximity the obvious choice. In this same room are two sculptures by Rob Wynne of glossy, bulbous mushrooms made of poured and blown glass, which rise in small clusters from the ground. David Brooks’ wall-suspended balcony with an uprooted tree branch attached to it, aptly named, *Balcony with Landscape and View* accompanies this. The works in this first room create a visual unity infrequently achieved in many exhibitions.



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This cohesive approach to curating is repeated throughout the show, but less directly. The works in the second and third rooms on the first floor of the gallery produce a dialogue with each other, as if the dividing wall was not there. Wade Kavanaugh & Stephen B. Nyugen's installed sprawling, branch-like limbs that make up a mock-animate material emerging from the other side of this wall which helps unite the two rooms.

The exhibition's theme provides a range of works that fit within its mission; objects made of organic material as well as works representing organic material, digitally manipulated images of fantastical, Avatar-esc environments are complemented by Vlatka Horkat's photographs of nowhere but everywhere locations with "Here to Stay" written out with leaves. Such juxtapositions are continued on the second floor, where two synthetic webbing designs flank an image of an unidentifiable green substance, randomly perforated and giving way to a scene of a glacier in situ. The same artist, Shane McAdams, made all three works. The diversity of artistic output is also present in Diana Cooper's work, who on the one hand created a synthetic 3-dimensional world of overlapping and crisscrossing linear forms, similar to that found in computer chips, and on the other, wrapped branches with yarn and stuck them in a glass case resting on a bed of sticks resembling a bird's nest.

Though it's difficult to find any art that isn't in some way inspired by "fundamental structures and occurrences that pervade nature," the curators did a good job of providing a more specific focus with a nucleus from which other works can make meaning based on how they relate to each other. This isn't to say, however, that there weren't pieces that left me wondering how they belonged. Aleksandra Mir's collage of biblical scenes set in modern times and Nir Hod's deflated balloons felt disconnected to the other works in the show. Nevertheless, a group show worth seeing.

"Natural Renditions" at runs through July 9th  
545 West 25th St  
Take the A, C or E to 23rd Street and/or the M23 bus to 11th Avenue  
Gallery Hours: Tues-Sat, 10-5:30  
Gallery website: [www.marlboroughgallery.com](http://www.marlboroughgallery.com)