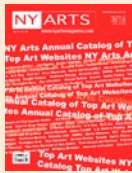


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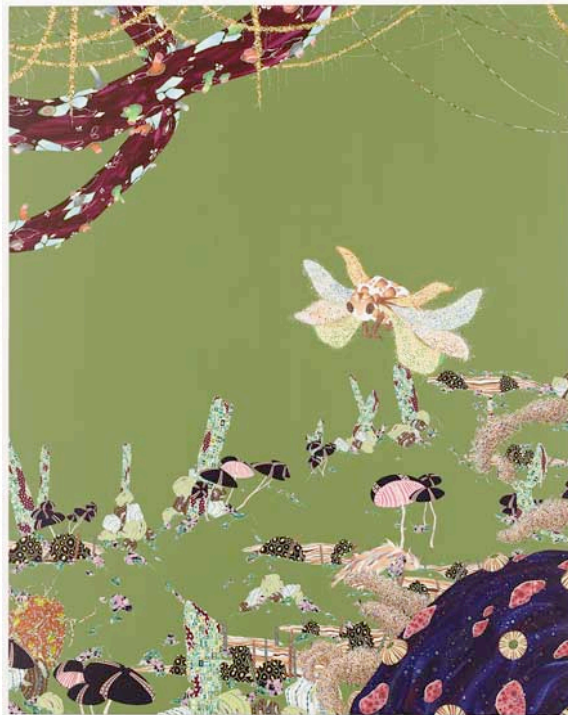
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Beau Chamberlain



Beau Chamberlain, You've Lost My Thoughts, 2006. 60 x 72 inches.

My work focuses on creating abstract environments populated by luminous flora and fauna that exist somewhere in between reality and fantasy. Large uninhabited spaces are neither empty, nor a backdrop, but assert themselves as palpable atmospheres. They are an exploration of mutation, imitation and definability in seemingly serene environments. Made with acrylic on wood panels, the paintings create ambiguous settings in which time, place and scale remain undefined.

Titles such as *You've Stolen My Thoughts* or *Be Here In The Morning* give the paintings a loose narrative structure that allows the viewer to piece together their interpretation of the scene. The viewer enters the environment unaware of whether they have just missed something or whether they are in the middle of some future action about to take place. At first, plant and animal life seem to be in a state of suspended animation, unable to break free of the vibrant, reverberating color of their atmosphere, but, at closer examination, the seemingly static landscapes reveal themselves: they are teeming with life. Undulating organic forms float through space, creating tension with one another and their environment. Hollow cocoons, empty trees and headless serpents are some of the recurring symbols of life and death, strength and instability, predator and prey. Nothing in these environments can be taken at face value.

Biomorphic life forms are subject to adaptation and mutation, as is necessary for their survival in hostile and constantly changing spaces. The creatures that inhabit the environments remain just outside of categorization: a plant may actually be an insect or a caterpillar might morph into a bird. Sentient creatures hide behind trees or swoop in from the edge of the panel. Are these creatures friend or foe? The danger, or lack thereof, remains indeterminate.

Isaac Asimov said: "The only constant is change, continuing change, inevitable change, that is the dominant factor in society today. No sensible decision can be made any longer without taking into account not only the world as it is, but the world as it will be." I am dealing not only with the ability of nature to adapt, but also the necessity of such changes in order to insure its survival. Initially inspired by my transition from the Pacific Northwest to the Northeastern region of the United States—specifically New York City, I have incorporated themes from my experience in order to draw parallels between the individual and the larger environments that we inhabit. These environments are in a perpetual state of transformation, yet often too slight to catch our attention. Imperceptible motion brings about great change.

Outside forces that affect us can be as major as death, or as simple as a "bad day," but all require an emotional response. The gravity of the situation is irrelevant because every change requires a response, appropriate or not. Issues faced due to my surroundings could never have been predicted, but that's not to say that life's changes come without personal action or responsibility. We determine everything from the clothes we wear and the people we hang out with, to the chemicals needed to manipulate mood and behavior. We are products of our environment but with more control than we sometimes credit ourselves with. It is often hard to take a step back in order to gain perspective and realistically evaluate personal evolution; what makes humans unique is our ability to use fantasy as a means of escape or adaptation.

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