

Trevor Shimizu

Cycles

April 1–April 29, 2023

“Throughout my teens and early twenties, I aspired to be a performing rock musician. Day on the Green at the Oakland Coliseum in 1992 was one of the most important experiences of my adolescence. There, I saw a wide spectrum of humanity and the physical limits of what the human body can endure and accomplish. Body Count was the opening act. Standing at the edge of one of the mosh pits while they performed, I witnessed several brutal acts. I hope I never again see so much blood and teeth flying between myself and a stranger. This was before smartphones and GPS, but my friends and I miraculously found each other in the upper deck of the Coliseum during Guns N Roses’ set, nearly six hours later. The outfield grass was torn out and thrown, flying past lighters held high as GNR played *November Rain*. The spirit of the concert was ruthless, unhinged, and lawless while simultaneously survivalist and romantic—the spectrum I witnessed is something I aspire to when making paintings.”—Trevor Shimizu, 2023

“Cycles” is Trevor Shimizu’s fifth solo exhibition at 47 Canal. Presenting nine new paintings, varying in scale and unrelenting in spirit, the artist continues to push further through the genre model of landscape painting, and past his painterly personas.

Throughout his practice, Shimizu’s material has always been taken from life—all that a painter needs is at hand. The works in this exhibition depart from oft-humorous archetypes (such as Tired Dad, Disgruntled Artist’s Assistant, or Heroic Painter) and serial (occasionally scatological) subject matter. Instead they depict dense and familiar scenes of gardens, river views, and ocean vistas. His paintings embody the restlessness of day to day life, of life in between increasingly extreme seasons, and the cycles of a world just outside one’s window.

While preceding Impressionists attempted to capture fleeting light, and Hudson River School painters the shifting sky, Shimizu’s oversized seasonal landscapes *October–November 2022* and *November–December 2022* (both completed in 2023) reveal the passage of time through the constantly changing backdrop of a backyard garden painted from intimate, unconstrained memory over periods of one month cycles. The quiet drama of dead leaves falling and clumpy snow overlay like stamps on various views in and of the garden. Heavy rocks, a stumpy hinoki tree, a stand of cheery arborvitae, and an adolescent redwood tree appear and reappear in the compositions as if circling the garden. Tulips and dogwood pop up in the spring and summer and are replaced by aster and sunflowers in the fall and winter.

If beauty is in the ephemeral then Shimizu paints with a kind of gestural economy and attitude that refuses preciousness and turns towards impermanence. He can move with such energetic irreverence that irregular outlines of taped-off edges and the stretcher bars underneath may show through, like in *Plum Blossoms* (2022). And upon close inspection remnants of bristles from his brush can be seen

embedded in the medium. Even the outline or shape of a branch goes unfixed, and an image once rendered will be rendered over again and again on the same canvas.

In the back gallery, *Two West Coast Landscapes Superimposed* (2023) sprawls out to the edges of the wall. More than a study of time, the largest painting in this exhibition brings into focus Shimizu's handling of formal technique through his distinctive use of color and loose style. Here, as the title implies, he layers one landscape over another. Purple plum trees ghost under the bold wash of a blue lagoon that leads up to a fading Pacific Ocean in the horizon. Clusters of colors and brushstrokes are seemingly unresolved at close distance, but like life itself, one can never really see the whole thing with all its splendid details.

Trevor Shimizu (b. 1978, California) lives and works in New York. He has had solo exhibitions at La Maison de Rendez-Vous, Brussels (2022); the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia (2020); Kunsthalle Lissabon, Portugal (2019); 47 Canal, New York; Galerie Christine Mayer, Munich; The Green Gallery, Milwaukee; Misako & Rosen, Tokyo; the Rowhouse Project, Baltimore (2015); and Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen (2013), among others. He has participated in group exhibitions at Stuart Shave Modern Art, London (2023); White Columns, New York (2015, 2011); the Whitney Biennial, New York (2014); and the Queens Museum of Art, New York (2012). Shimizu's work is also included in public collections such as the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit; K11 Art Foundation, Hong Kong; and High Museum of Art, Atlanta.