

John McAllister

*Sometimes symphony clatter calm*

**Opening:** Friday, 3 March 2023, 6 – 8 pm

**Exhibition:** 3 March – 15 April 2023

Do you know this moment when an orchestra just finishes tuning right before the official concert starts? This wild, polyphonic sound of the orchestra warming up suddenly comes to an end and there is a certain quiet and calm, almost electric feeling in the air. “Sometimes symphony clatter calm”, the title of John McAllister’s third solo exhibition at Wentrup, is a portal channeling this energetic feeling.

As viewers we find ourselves in front of landscapes in near-psychedelic tonalities. Our eyes wander over violet mountains sloping gently downward, meeting orange-chartreuse fields that burst with impressionistic punctuations in crimson, aqua, and goldenrod against nearly fluorescent pink skies and hills rendered in vivid magenta, which reflect blue in glowing orange ponds. It is given that McAllister’s paintings aren’t displaying colors as they appear in nature, and aren’t a depiction of a specific landscape. Instead, they are an edited collection of what he has seen and experienced, be it in nature or on the walls of a museum. They are a collage of landscapes ranging from his childhood spent in the countryside of Louisiana near a lagoon opening onto the ocean surrounded by dense trees to the dry and bushy, almost desert-like nature in Texas where he studied. Later the particular atmosphere of Los Angeles and California itself, where light can be so bright and the coasts so beautiful, all the while an undercurrent of fragility pervades as the heat and tender landscape awaits the simplest spark to become engulfed.

When McAllister arrived in New York in the new millennium, he worked as a night guard at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. His prolonged, isolated interaction with the masterworks of art history challenged his visual sensibility and initiated a thought process that absorbed the visual language of Impressionist, Post-Impressionist, and Fauvist painters that are now embedded in his image-making process. The more time he spent with these masterworks, the more he realized how much an artwork says about the way a person thinks and how the brain organizes colors and structures. That painting isn’t just about showing or picturing something, that it’s more about the transfer of a feeling into an image. So, he became more interested in the poetic response to something rather than just picturing it.

McAllister is affected by colors. He's drawn to them and chooses them naturally. While painting, he continually reflects upon how the images make him feel being surrounded by them, how they interact with each other in concert. He's searching for that electric feeling he had when spending the nights at the Metropolitan Museum and is interested in how a little shift of a color or tone creates a totally different experience. The titles of his paintings and exhibitions reflect these feelings and provide a bit of gentle guidance as to how they operate. Poetically they make a suggestion. For example, *sometimes glowing loud loudly, echoes lion like seemed serenest or glamour like some secret sorcery*.

We all know this moment when we get absorbed by nature; when we lose ourselves. Imagine looking at the sunset over the Venice lagoon as the sky turns pinkish-purple and parades of cotton candy glide across the sky. That's precisely the feeling conjured when you find yourself in front of a John McAllister painting – the sense of “sometimes symphony clatter calm”.

John McAllister was born in 1973 in Slidell, Louisiana. He lives and works in Northampton, Massachusetts.

John McAllister has been exhibited at galleries and museums worldwide, among them Biennale des Art, Nice FR | Le Consortium, Dijon, FR | Almine Rech Gallery, Brussels, BE / Paris, FR | Massimo de Carlo Pièce Unique, Paris, FR | Hagiwara Projects, Tokyo, JP | Acquavella Gallery, New York, US | Museum MAMCO, Geneva, CH | Brattleboro Museum of Art, Vermont, US | James Fuentes Gallery, New York, US | Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago US | David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, US | Marciano Art Foundation, Los Angeles, US | Rubell Family Collection, Miami, US.

His works are part of the following collections: HNA Group Inc. Collection, Hong Kong, HK | Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, US | Collection of Martin Eisenberg, New York, US | UBS Art Collection, New York, US | The Rubell Family Collection, Miami, US | Collection of Joseph Mimran, Toronto, CA | Collection of César and Mimi Reyes, San Juan, PR | MAK Family Collection, Munich.