



Joe Lugara: “Scrutiny,” 40 Paintings

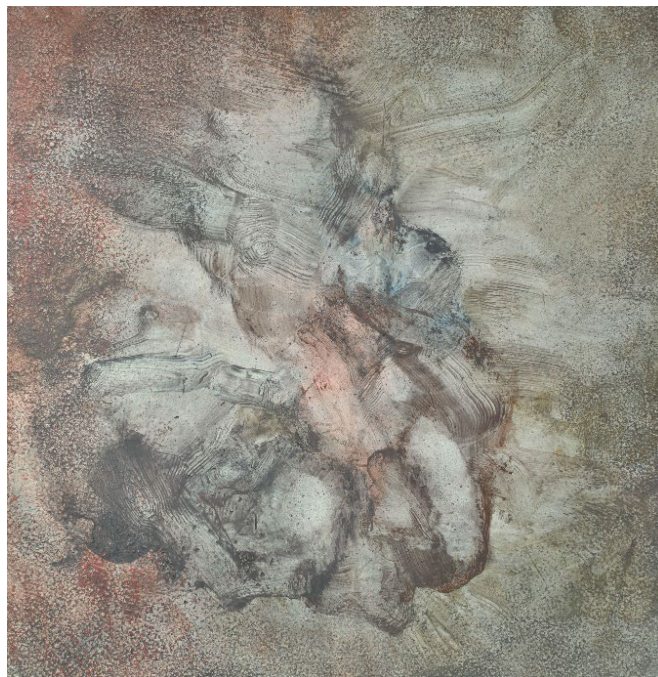
- **Opening Reception:**
Third Thursday,
July 21, 2022
5:00 – 7:00 pm

The Noyes Museum of Art of Stockton University in Hammonton is excited to announce that artist Joe Lugara will be featured in a solo exhibition titled “Scrutiny: 40 Paintings.” An opening reception for “Scrutiny: 40 Paintings,” free and open to the public, will be held July 21 from 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m., with a closing reception September 15, from 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Forty paintings from New Jersey artist Joe Lugara’s series “Scrutiny” will be featured in a solo exhibition at the Noyes Galleries at Kramer Hall in Hammonton from July 12 – October 7, 2022. The exhibited works are part of a continuing series. Begun in 2013, “Scrutiny,” which is still in progress, consists of more than 200 small-scale watercolor paintings on board. The images are abstract but suggest various aspects of nature—terrains, atmospheric conditions, insects, mud slides, plants, animals, bones, and fossils.

The artist describes the series as a nature walk. “Like the title implies, the series is about observation,” the artist said. “I’m more concerned with how we observe nature than I am about depicting nature accurately. I wouldn’t be working abstractly if I were concerned with physical accuracy. My purpose is to produce shapes that vaguely suggest natural forms and phenomena. They should seem alien and yet distantly familiar, activating our imaginations as to what nature means to us. The small scale of the paintings should emphasize the sense and intensity of observation.”

Nature, the artist said, “never stops being mysterious. The more we experience its details, the broader its overall mystery becomes. That’s my goal with ‘Scrutiny’: to bring to the viewer, through a myriad of peculiar details, an exaggerated encounter with the range of the natural world.”



Joe Lugara, *No. 21 (Scrutiny Series)*, watercolor

Artist Biography:

Joe Lugara took up painting and photography as a boy after his father discarded them as hobbies. His paintings depict odd forms, inexplicable phenomena, and fantastic dreamscapes, taking as their basis horror and science fiction films produced from the 1930s through the late 1960s. He began making abstractions in Photoshop in the 2010s.

Inspired by horror films of the 1930's and 1940's, his work contains aspects of these movies. They sense that the world is a mysteriously appealing and perilous place, something to be approached with both wonder and caution. "I'm not referring to the exaggerated ideas of good and evil," the artist said, "but to ambiguity, to the dangers that exist even in the most innocuous-looking things, of the difficulty of distinguishing safe from harm merely by sight, or sometimes even by experience." While some of his pictures are pretty, it doesn't mean they are benign. His work should cause you to ask, "If that shape in that painting were real, would I touch it?"

Lugara's work has been featured in 22 magazines and has appeared in more than 40 exhibitions in museums and galleries in the New York Metropolitan Area, including The Noyes Museum of Art; the New Jersey State Museum; Bergen Community College; Proteus Gowanus (Brooklyn); Drawing Rooms (Jersey City, New Jersey); Curious Matter (Jersey City); and in New York City with, among others, 80 Washington Square East Galleries at New York University.

He was nominated for the 2021 Best of the Net Anthology and has recently completed two illustrated books. Paintings from his "Scrutiny" series will be featured in issue 46 of *Kissing Dynamite: A Journal of Poetry* beginning October 1.

The Noyes Galleries at Kramer Hall are located at 30 Front Street, Hammonton, New Jersey. Gallery hours are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m, and Thursday 8:30 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. (609) 626-3805; www.noyesmuseum.org.

The Noyes Museum of Art of Stockton University

www.noyesmuseum.org

(609) 626-3420

The Noyes Arts Garage of Stockton University

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Joe Lugara, *No. 1 (Scrutiny Series)*,
watercolor