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Austin Eddy SAD LANDSCAPES

2 July 2022 - 9 October 2022
Académie Conti, La Romanée Conti
Curated by Eric Troncy



Installation view, Austin Eddy, Selected Poems, Eva Presenhuber, Private Showroom, New York 2022
© Austin Eddy Courtesy the artist and Galerie Eva Presenhuber Photo: Kyle Knodell

Austin Eddy (1986, Boston). Lives in New York.
With generous support from Eva Presenhuber gallery, Zurich, New York, Vienne

*Night, melancholy, heavy with summer,
Full of silence and darkness, in the azure
That a gentle wind brushes, rocks asleep
The tree that trembles, the nightingale that weeps.*

Paul Verlaine, "The Nightingale" (Sad Landscapes), *Saturnian Poems*, 1866. Translation, A.S. Kline, 2002, Poetry In Translation

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By setting his exhibition under the auspices of Paul Verlaine's *Saturnian Poems*—the title "Sad Landscapes" is borrowed from one of the four sets of poems ("Melancholia," "Etchings," "Sad Landscapes," "Caprices") that comprise Verlaine's first published collection—Austin Eddy makes no secret of the poetic dimension of his work.

Born in Boston in 1986, Eddy studied painting and drawing at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, before moving to New York in 2011. "I think the first thing I remember ever making was a rudimentary drawing of a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle. It was made up of a series of scribbles that took up the majority of the page, and roughly described the shape of a figure. Can't remember if it was drawn in a green or just in pencil."

The birds, a motif reminiscent of those by Matisse and Brancusi that Eddy now summons iteratively, are akin to a point of entry into the *painting of feeling* that is his work. Simple and immediately identifiable, they also constitute a catalog of abstract forms: the eyes are circles that can be concentric or added together, the beaks are pointed forms that can be open and bisected, to create a more or less widened triangle, etc. In fact, his work was essentially abstract until 2018. Now, with its semblance of naive or folk art aspects blended with decorative aspirations, Austin Eddy's painting is certainly a singular mirror of the present in art, where everything is re-evaluated without a grandiloquent trial, where no style seems taboo anymore, but where the ambition of the avant-garde has not surrendered. It is a painting that is also very conscious of what it is now: a kind of experience for the viewer. "I am not sure what I hope people take away from the paintings other than some sort of an experience. Hopefully something that makes them think about something other than checking their phones."

Sad Landscapes is held in the former winery of the Prince de Conti—an 18th century house located nearby the famous vineyard of La Romanée Conti. It brings together new paintings, a set of drawings made over the past three years, and a significant group of bronze sculptures where Austin Eddy evokes the memory of modernist sculpture.

—Éric Troncy