



LOS ANGELES

Sarah Awad: "The Women" at Diane Rosenstein Fine Art

It's well known that the Fauvists had a tremendous zest for life, a passionate and sometimes extraordinary relationship to the world around them. Self described by Matisse as stylistically extravagant, they considered themselves maverick thinkers. In keeping with this same visual rubric for bold colors and a spontaneous objective response to nature, Sarah Awad delivers a sweetly satisfying cornucopia of lush imagery in her most recent exhibition at Diane Rosenstein Fine Art, bluntly titled "The Women." For this show, Awad's paintings are divided into two groups: large-scale female nudes and landscapes. Yet, compositionally, these two distinct categories are at once blurred though vaguely connected through space and movement. In *Untitled Reclining Women* (2013), for example, the landscape surrounding the women interrupts the literal physical space of their bodies, pulsing forward yet simultaneously receding. This effect suffuses all the work in the exhibition creating the experience of a journey through color, space and shape, rather than a set of distinctly articulated separate images. *Untitled (Glacier V)* (2013) visually conflates the natural landscape with the physicality of the human form as though the central yellow shape at the heart of the image was a woman reclining on a couch, yet it also "reads" as a disrupted, jagged imaginative structure that appears to be shifting.

These paintings are both intimate and public, their massive scale sometimes at odds with the quietude of the images presented; it is this tension between scale and content that is most powerful as though these garish bodies resist being seen, yet simultaneously and publicly indulge their corporeality. Combining abstraction with representational forms can be challenging, and achieving a balance between two very disparate styles can often lead to didactic imagery. But while Awad does reference artists like Marlene Dumas and Cecily Brown, who are her most obvious influences, these paintings attest to a distinctive and complex visual lexicon that is all her own.

—EVE WOOD

"UNTITLED (GLACIER V)," 2013, Sarah Awad
OIL ON CANVAS, 38" X 42"

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AND DIANE ROSENSTEIN FINE ART

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