

T.L. Solien: See the Sky





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May 1 – July 17, 2021

Curatorial Statement:

The Nemeth Art Center is excited to present *T. L. Solien: See the Sky*, guest curated by Christopher Atkins. Solien is one of the region's most prominent, well-respected, and prolific artists and this compact survey of the artist's career will be organized around overlapping themes, such literature, art, landscape and autobiography. These themes are familiar to many artists, but Solien has a distinct Neo-Surrealist vocabulary that is accented with illustrative exaggeration, multi-colored layered collage, and a sometimes-furtive sense of humor. The exhibition includes significant paintings, sculptures, and works on paper – some of which have not been exhibited before.

See the Sky will show some of Solien's long-term engagements with classic and contemporary literature. *Moby-Dick*; Or the *White Whale* and Sena Jeter Naslund's *Ahab's Wife*, or the *Star-Gazer* are echoed in paintings such as *Blanket Ceremony* and *Husband Lost at Sea*. His work is inspired by novels in which societal norms are destabilized, such Flannery O'Connor's *Good Country People* and Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian*. Like other post-modern artists, Solien gleans details and mixes sources from each book and his own creative journey. He is careful not to illustrate them though, focusing instead on inspiration, self-discovery, and creative journeys.

Solien's work is also where he shows his deep knowledge of art history, especially the influence of his favorite artists. Some of the most recognizable artists he has borrowed from over the years are the Sieneese painter Duccio, and modernists such as Pablo Picasso and Winslow Homer. Similar to his interest in narrative and storytelling, Solien's recent paintings are a means to connect with the past through still-life painting, as in *Theorem*, or religious stories and allegories that mark significant moments of transition like *The Renunciation 2*. His work also includes pop-culture references to sports heroes and illustration that echo Disney cartoons and painters such as Peter Saul.

From the beginning of his career until now, the landscape of the upper Midwest has left an indelible mark on Solien's work, "The land is flat, the space is so deep that it seems shallow, and the sense of scale is often distorted." Landscape is often the setting for and stage upon which Solien's characters experience significant changes or depart on life-changing journeys. And this knowledge of the evocative power of the landscape has stayed with him as he explored the legacy of Westward expansion and religious journeys, evident in pieces such as *Cranberry Harvest* and *Wasteland*.

Similar to the German Expressionists that he admires, Solien's work is self-referential; an autobiographical construct that is both painfully mundane and mythologized. "What I value as content is a kind of confessional. It's a retelling through symbols of one's experiences." It's in these works he shares some of his deepest concerns; life-changing moments, the performance of masculinity and parenting, not to mention the sacrifices he has made to live a creative life. In each, a moment of being lost in thought becomes an example for how artists distill familiar experiences into "a larger sense of human experience."

Solien has had a long career in Minnesota and the upper Midwest region, with prominent solo and group exhibitions at the Plains Art Museum and Madison Museum of Contemporary Art. Local audiences will appreciate how Solien's real and fictional landscapes have more than a passing resemblance to the forests of northwestern Minnesota and North Dakota, the area he was born in 1949 and where he and his wife once lived.

Solien is known to many artists as an influential professor. He has taught at The Ohio State University (1990), University of Iowa (1991-1995), Montana State University (1996-1997), and finally, at University of Wisconsin – Madison, where he recently retired after a 23-year career (1997 – 2020).

MAIN GALLERY



T. L. Solien

Dog in Heat, 2018

Mixed media collage on paper

30 x 22 inches

\$7,000.00



T. L. Solien

Lame Casanova, 2018

Acrylic on tarpaulin

108 x 108 inches

\$40,000.00



T. L. Solien

Willie Sawyer and Fox Decoy, 2018

Acrylic and enamel on canvas tarp

108 x 72 inches (each)

\$50,000.00



T. L. Solien

The Renunciation 2, 2015

Acrylic and enamel on canvas

72 x 96 inches

\$30,000.00



T. L. Solien

Less, 2012

Acrylic and enamel on canvas

78 x 96 inches

\$35,000.00



T. L. Solien

Wasteland, 2011

Acrylic and enamel on canvas

78 x 96 inches

\$35,000.00



T. L. Solien

Everyman, 2011

Acrylic, oil, enamel on canvas

20 x 24 inches

\$8,000.00



T. L. Solien

Greensleeves, 2017

Oil and enamel on canvas

72 x 60 inches

\$25,000.00



T. L. Solien

Husband Lost at Sea (3/5), 1985

Lithograph, screenprint and mixed media

26 x 40 inches

\$ (NFS)

SCULPTURES



T. L. Solien

Man with Pipe, 2019

Wood and mixed media

14 x 8 x 8 inches

\$5,500.00



T. L. Solien

Leg, 2019

Mixed media

18 x 11 x 4 inches

\$6,000.00



T. L. Solien

Patriarch 2, 2019

Found object, mixed media

20.5 x 16 x 6 inches

\$5,000.00



T. L. Solien

Igloo, 2012

Polystyrene and mixed media

8.5 x 6 x 6 inches

\$3,000.00



T. L. Solien

8-Track Rambler, 2019

Found objects, mixed media

21 x 18 x 16 inches

\$6,500.00



T. L. Solien

Shine it in a Bushel, 2019

Found objects, mixed media

36 x 11.5 x 10 inches

\$8,000.00



T. L. Solien

Pants Shitter, 2019

Found objects, mixed media

32.5 x 12 x 15 inches

\$11,500.00



T. L. Solien

Squash Hatchet Snowball, 2019

Found objects, mixed media

16 x 12 x 7.5 inches

\$7,000.00



T. L. Solien

Scout, 2019

Found objects, mixed media

16 x 5 x 8 inches

\$5,000.00

SIDE GALLERIES



T. L. Solien

Tomb, 2016

Oil and collage on panel

16 x 20 inches

\$7,000.00



T. L. Solien

Castle by the Lake, 2016

Oil and collage on panel

16 x 20 inches

\$7,000.00



T. L. Solien

The Unquiet Night, 2016

Oil, enamel and collage on panel

16 x 20 inches

\$7,000.00



T. L. Solien

Woman at the Well, 2016

Oil and collage on panel

16 x 20 inches

\$7,000.00



T. L. Solien

Hail Mary, 2017

Oil and enamel on canvas

48 x 36 inches

\$16,000.00



T. L. Solien

Angelic Contraction, 2015

Acrylic, enamel and collage on canvas,

23 x 31 inches

\$9,000.00



T. L. Solien

Pee in Hole, 2016

Oil and enamel on canvas,

23 x 31 inches

\$9,000.00



T. L. Solien

L'Etranger, 2013

Acrylic and enamel on canvas

96 x 78 inches

\$35,000.00



T. L. Solien

Lou 1968, 2015

Acrylic, enamel and collage on panel

23 x 31 inches

\$9,000.00



T. L. Solien

Custodian's Jersey, 2013

Acrylic and enamel on canvas

48 x 60 inches

\$20,000.00



T. L. Solien

Traveler and Valise, 2016

Acrylic and enamel on canvas

21 x 33 inches

\$9,000.00



T. L. Solien

The Cranberry Harvest, 2005

Mixed media collage on paper

30 x 36 inches

\$9,000.00



T. L. Solien

The Ring Cycle, 2019

Acrylic, collage and enamel on paper

58 x 38 inches

\$12,000.00



T. L. Solien

Composition in Black and White, 2006

Mixed media collage on paper

30 x 36 inches

\$9,000.00



T. L. Solien

Blanket Ceremony, 2010

Mixed media collage on paper

30 x 36 inches

\$9,000.00



T. L. Solien

Boys Life, 2004

Oil and enamel on canvas

78 x 96 inches

\$35,000.00



T. L. Solien

Theorem, 2019

Acrylic, oil and enamel on canvas

29 x 45 inches

\$ (NFS)



T. L. Solien

Squash Hatchet Snowballs, 2019

Acrylic, oil and enamel on canvas

20 x 16 inches

\$7,000.00



T. L. Solien

Iowa Chop, 2019

Acrylic, oil and enamel on canvas

20 x 24 inches

\$8,000.00



T. L. Solien

Man Passing Narrow Door, 2019

Acrylic, oil and enamel on canvas

20 x 16 inches

\$7,000.00

ARTIST BIO:

T.L. SOLIEN

T.L. Solien, born in Fargo North Dakota in 1949, received a BA degree in Art from Moorhead State University, Moorhead MN in 1973, and an MFA in Painting and Sculpture from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1977.

Solien has been invited to participate in numerous exhibitions of National and International magnitude including, the 1983 Whitney Biennial, the 39th Biennial of American Painting at the Corcoran Museum, Washington, D.C.; Avant-Garde in the 80's, at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; The American Artist as Printmaker, Brooklyn Museum NY; Images and Impressions, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN and Contemporary Drawings, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA.

Solien's work has been visible in over 35 solo exhibitions in the last 25 years, and was the subject of a 25 -year retrospective titled, "T.L. Solien: Myths and Monsters" organized by the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Madison WI., as well as "Toward The Setting Sun", organized by the Plains Museum, Fargo, ND, and traveling to the Yellowstone Museum of Art, Billings MT, and the Sheldon Museum, Lincoln, NE.

T.L. Solien has been the recipient of numerous honors, including multiple Bush Foundation and Jerome Foundation fellowships, University of Wisconsin Graduate School Research Grants, and has been named "Outstanding Alumni" at both the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and Moorhead State University, MN. In 2008 Solien was awarded a fellowship from the Joan Mitchell Foundation, and in 2010 received a Wisconsin State Arts Board fellowship. In 2017 Solien was awarded a prestigious WARF named professorship from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Solien is represented in numerous corporate and public collections including, The Whitney Museum of American Art, The Art Institute of Chicago, The Walker Art Center, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, The Tate Museum, London, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Chase Manhattan Bank, Exxon Corporation, New York University, Indiana University Art Museum, University of Iowa Museum of Art, Plains Art Museum, Fargo, ND, and the Chazen Museum, Madison, WI , The Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Madison, WI; and the Milwaukee Museum of Art.

CURATOR BIO:

CHRISTOPHER ATKINS

Christopher Atkins is an independent curator and writer. He was Curator of Exhibitions at the Minnesota Museum of American Art from 2015 - 2019, where he organized numerous group- and one-person exhibitions, including Material Mythologies, We the People, and the nationally recognized Ken Gonzales-Day: Shadowlands. He organized a variety of site-specific installations, an exhibition of the museum's studio craft collection and dozens of exhibition-related public programs. He was Coordinator of the Minnesota Artists Exhibition Program at Mia from 2009-2015. He led MAEP through an important transition and reinvigorated the program, presenting ambitious and experimental site-responsive projects and organizing various artist-in-residency programs.

Atkins has served as an adjunct lecturer at the College of Visual Arts, Minneapolis College of Art & Design, and Macalester College where he taught courses on museum studies, visual cultures, and contemporary art. He has served as a juror and guest curator on national competitions and exhibitions. He holds M.Res & M.A. degrees in Visual Cultures from Goldsmiths College, University of London, Graduate Certificate of Museum Studies from Harvard University and B.A. History of Art from the College of Wooster.

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