

LYONS WIER GALLERY

542 West 24th Street • New York • NY • 10011

Edie Nadelhaft

Big Country: Paintings of the Road Less Traveled

January 5 - 29, 2017

Lyons Wier Gallery
542 West 24th Street, New York, NY 10011

Gallery Hours: Tues - Sat, 11-6pm

"America is not a place, it is a road." - Mark Twain



Edie Nadelhaft, *Midway, PA*, 2016, Oil on panel, Bumm mirror housing
3.5 x 5.5 in / 9 x 14 cm (panel)

[New York] ***Big Country: Paintings of The Road Less Traveled*** is a show of new works by **Edie Nadelhaft** based on imagery glimpsed in her rear view mirrors as she navigates North America by motorcycle. Created to scale and situated within actual motorcycle mirror housings, these paintings are literal scenes from a road trip -- historically, the quintessential American rite of passage. The exhibition title references the late artist Edward Avedisian's description of America: "It's a big country, and the only thing keeping it together is television." Whether or not this was uttered in jest, Ms. Nadelhaft has seen the sentiment borne out in earnest on journeys that lead her away from her typical social and cultural experiences and out of her comfort zone. In an effort to avoid "the slab", as the Interstate is known in motorcycle-speak, Ms. Nadelhaft seeks out back roads and scenic byways, visiting places along the way that have yet to be subsumed by big box stores and global chain restaurants. The reward is a front row seat on a very different America, one rife with odd and often charming, if somewhat shabby idiosyncrasies, many of which appear in the work. Unlike Ms. Nadelhaft's previous work, these paintings include a clear, if subtle narrative. Each piece includes some residue of a human presence (a sign, a road, a building). The slick, hard-edged beauty of these man-made elements strikes a sharp contrast to the lush, raw landscape in which they appear.

A less obvious aspect of the work questions its very basis--do we still want, or perhaps more importantly, do we still need road trips in the digital age? Driving, and especially motorcycling, has long been viewed as synonymous with the freedom, rebellion and self-expression embedded in our national psyche. But recent technological advances now undermine this convention. An unintended consequence of ubiquitous personal computing is a historic decline in the number of teenagers pursuing that most coveted symbol of emancipation: a driver's license. The rise of digital culture has rendered the physical distribution of people and goods less urgent at the very least, if not completely unnecessary. People are no longer isolated socially or professionally by geography because many jobs can be done remotely; texts and chat take the place of face-to-face personal contact. And when there is no sense of place, personal space and time is less clearly delineated.

More to the point, one doesn't actually have to travel to see anything anymore. Motorcycling offers a means of embedding oneself within the physical landscape--to a much greater degree than a car trip. The rear view becomes a metaphor for the decline of this type of activity. First-hand physical experience of the actual world is literally receding into the past. In such a time, it is both refreshing and strange to get on the road and just ride. Clearly Ms. Nadelhaft is not alone. From *Rain Man* to *Burning Man*, the road trip continues to feature prominently in the American imagination.

"To date, I have ridden in 33 of the lower 48 states, as well as Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Quebec. The vastness of this continent is unmistakable. The climate and geographical diversity alone is stunning. When I read Avedisian's comment in 2013, I laughed out loud. But if I thought it was funny then, the poignancy of the remark couldn't be any clearer now in the harsh light of our recent presidential election. For better or worse, it remains my BIG, (beautiful, messy), COUNTRY." - Edie Nadelhaft.

Edie Nadelhaft studied painting and art history at S.U.N.Y Purchase, New York and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, MA. She received her BFA with honors from Massachusetts College of Art, Boston, MA. Edie has exhibited extensively across the United States, including the Provincetown Art Association Museum, Provincetown, MA, Fort Wayne Museum of Art, Fort Wayne, IN, Naples Museum of Art, Naples, FL, Chelsea Art Museum, New York, NY and Texas Contemporary, Houston, TX. She has completed artist residencies at the Gary & Melissa Oakland Studio, Visible Vault, Yellowstone Art Museum, Billings, MT, and Platte Clove Artist-In-Residency, Catskill Center for Conservation & Development, Catskill, NY. Edie Nadelhaft lives and works in New York City, NY.