

KATHERINE MANN

Artist Statement

My paintings depict ever-changing fantasy worlds where blood cells, rainforests and coral reefs collide and intertwine. Each piece functions as a man-sized porthole into a landscape alive with minute details, patterns and interlocking systems. This is achieved through the conglomeration of tiny minutia piled and cobbled together to create the larger, overarching relationships that define the whole painting—usually organic forms that grow and breath but also become overwhelmed with their own excess. I work with ambiguous shapes that could function as elements in radically different environments in the real world—a scabby circular shape could be a marsh object covered with barnacles, a white blood cell, or a cratered moon. Thus the real environments of reefs, rainforests, outer space and microbiology are smashed into one incongruous whole.

The desire to create epic realms begins in childhood, and I explore those early desires and anxieties by creating intricate fields that I find at once suffocating and fabulous. Racially and geographically incongruous myself, I consider the paintings to be utter hybrids, speaking a language of dualisms to create fields punctuated by moments of absurdity, poetry, mutation, growth and decay. They glory in the sensuous and the rambling, but intersperse the chaos with moments of neurotic control. They explore the potentialities of growth, but also of excess and overabundance. Like the fantasies and fears of childhood play, they are epic narratives, entire societies of fleshy worms, ink noodles or patterned blobs. But they are also clotted, epileptic.