

Showing Hope at Duck Creek in Springs

Bodies engaged in focused but enigmatic tasks in the landscape

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The Arts Center at Duck Creek in Springs will conclude its inaugural season with an exhibition of five paintings by Soren Hope, a 25-year-old figurative painter whose work depicts human bodies engaged in focused but enigmatic tasks in the landscape. The show will open Saturday with a reception from 5 to 7 p.m. and continue through Oct. 14.

Ms. Hope, whose parents are Erling Hope, a liturgical artist and cabinetmaker, and Alice Hope, a sculptor, grew up on the South Fork and attended the Hayground School in Bridgehampton. "I was brought up drawing," she said. "My dad started formally training me with rendering skills when I was really young."

After high school in New York City, she attended Carleton College in Minnesota. "I went to a liberal arts school because I wanted to study other things as well as art. I really started painting in high school, but I think it was sometime at Hayground when I realized I wanted to be an artist."

She has always worked figuratively, focused on the human face early on and then shifting to full-figure studies in college. "My original entry point for the figure was an aesthetic obsession with the materiality of flesh and the body, but recently it has become more about narrative and putting bodies in situations of myopic attention."

The paintings in the exhibition depict figures in open spaces engaged in tasks such as checking for ticks, finding a lost earring, examining gum on the sole of a shoe, and fiddling with a broken zipper. "I'm working at a scale where there is a lot of information given, but the one thing you don't get to see is the thing that the people are working on."

In many of her works some of the interacting figures are clothed while others are in various stages of undress, which adds an erotic element as well as a puzzling one. "I'm interested in more than a one-to-one relationship with the figures," she said with respect to three of the paintings in which the bodies are approximately a quarter scale larger than life-size.



Soren Hope's recent paintings depict human bodies in situations of myopic attention, in this case checking for ticks.

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