

AI-AP PRESENTS



## Diana Horowitz at Bookstein Projects

By Peggy Roalf | Wednesday, November 11, 2020



Diana Horowitz, *Ragusa Ibla*, 2017, Oil on linen, 6 x 9 inches.

Diana Horowitz, a painter who speaks the language of landscape, opened a show of new works on Saturday at Bookstein Projects. The festive event included a sidewalk opening reception as visitors were invited in four at a time to the townhouse gallery that has just the right ambiance for this collection, titled “Small Works.”

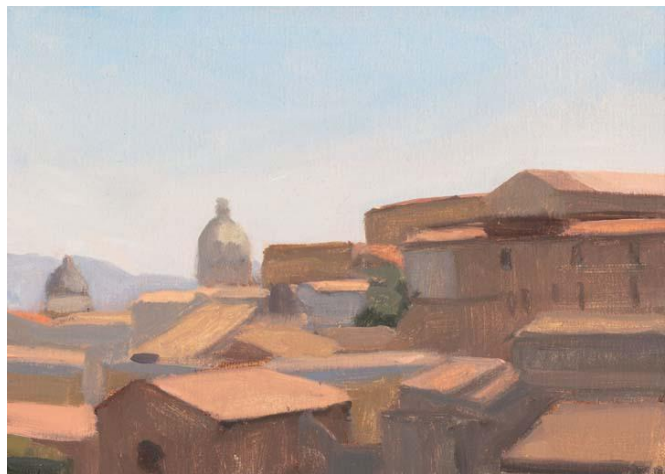
The artist has always painted at an intimate scale but the show’s title is a bit understated, as none of the works—ethereal evocations of the Italian landscape, many in Lombardy—exceed nine inches on any side, and many are at five by seven inches. Painted at the top of the tonal scale, from an elevated viewpoint, in

colors that seem to have absorbed the reflected light of their settings, the works are mesmerizing.

Horowitz says that her penchant for viewing the world from above comes from her experience of growing up in Washington Heights at one of the highest points in Manhattan, where she had an elevated view of the Cloisters that influenced what she calls an inner archetypal landscape. She has also said that she often dreamed about being high up looking out that ninth-floor window and that “the way things flatten out and become abstracted in the distance is part of what has attracted me to the distant views.” The artist answered my questions about her work and process in an email interview this week:

**Peggy Roalf:** Your work has been at an intimate scale for the most part, over time. What prompted you to take on an almost miniature size for the new series, which are painted at a monumental scale?

**Diana Horowitz:** I’ve always loved making small paintings and I’ve always been told, starting back in art school, then grad school, and then by galleries, that I needed to do larger scale paintings.



Diana Horowitz, *Palermo Rooftops*, 2019, Oil on linen panel, 5 x 7 inches.

In the last five years, I decided to follow my own instincts which were leading me to make these tiny paintings. I love the contradiction of vast spaces and monumental structures, compressed into these small sizes, and it is also very liberating.

I studied with various Color Field Painters such as Doug Ohlson, Robert Swain and Sanford Wurmfeld, as well as growing up around many painters who had studied with Hans Hofmann. Overall it was something of a boys' club and the macho ethos that bigger is better, bigger equals ambitious, smaller is lesser certainly prevailed. Maybe this is my quiet rebellion. Getting to know Lois Dodd who was at Brooklyn College when I was in graduate school there and seeing her amazing five-by-seven-inch "Flashings" is definitely part of what inspired me to grant myself permission.



Diana Horowitz, *Grey Day from Erice*, 2019, Oil on linen, 6 x 8 inches.

**PR:** Working at the top end of the value scale is, to me, a fascinating choice—I am thinking of a piece titled *Grey Day from Erice*, and another hung nearby. Can you tell the readers about your process in terms of experimentation to develop an “Interaction of color” that often operates within a narrow range of tonal values? Or perhaps “interaction of light” is more apt?

**DH:** I feel like sometimes I am looking for the poetry in a very narrow range of tonal values, and love to find the intangibles of light and air that provoke feeling for me there. Some of my favorite paintings like many of Ad Reinhardt's Blue or Black paintings operate in a very narrow range of tone albeit on the other end of the value range.



**PR:** Taking a distant view from a high perspective in this group of works, for me seems to create an aura of distance in time, perhaps an homage to antiquity. Was there anything in particular that brought you to this viewpoint?

**DH:** I have always been attracted to painting things from a high vantage point. I love the way things are abstracted in the distance. I do think that a certain timeless even classical quiet is found in those distances.

*Diana Horowitz: Small Works* continues at Bookstein Projects through December 18. 60 East 66th Street, New York, NY 10065. Images courtesy the gallery, except for the installation view, courtesy the author.

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