

Joe Andoe Rolling Hills

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“An open chord but turned up really loud.”

Almine Rech is pleased to present *Rolling Hills*, an exhibition of new paintings by the New York-based painter Joe Andoe. This is the artist's third solo show with Almine Rech, featuring five works on canvas created between late 2019 and May 2020. *Rolling Hills* continues the artist's abiding interest in the landscapes and totems of the American experience, rendering enigmatic imagery that conjures a uniquely American mythos.

Rolling Hills represents a continuation of three motifs: saddles, from a body of work Andoe has been building since last year, obliquely related to his paintings of classic American cars, wherein the saddle functions as proxy for the driver's seat; saddles floating atop landscapes, which collides the former with Andoe's career-long interest in the internalized vastness surrounding Tulsa, Oklahoma, the artist's hometown; and stags, which belong to the lineage of the painter's disquieting depictions of solitary animals, such as horses, wolves, coyotes, dogs, and bison.

Andoe's spare compositions feature a figurative focus — disembodied saddles or lone, spectral stags floating in a void — but they are rooted more in mood than likeness, tracing an intangible absence, a lack of noise that nonetheless reverberates. They're at once humble and magisterial, provincial and profound. Painted from found photographs, they ultimately escape their subject matter entirely, becoming abstractions of themselves. Andoe's vision is consuming: an Americana — one of open roads and incorrigible spirit, but also psychic dislocation and searching — a headlong dive into his memories of the place that shaped him.

“They grow out of the longitude and latitude of where I'm from...each one grows into the next, like in a telescope. I'm just trying to stay in the lane and log some miles.”

Andoe returns to his signature technique of applying a thick layer of oil paint to his surfaces — rich ochre, dusty leather, permanent midnight — marking the outlines of his subjects, and then wiping away the wet paint. The result reveals the dyed grain of the fine canvas linen underneath, a textural foundation that expresses kinship with the minimalist compositions of Robert Ryman. The unresolved tension between abstraction and representation compound their mystery, an unplaceable naturalism cleaved from the material plane. Andoe's forms, cool, unyielding, envision an American Elysium, an ethereal landscape of indeterminate location, a portal to the next world, a camera aperture that remains open forever.

- Max Lakin