



DIPPED IN STARDUST

Green Family Art Foundation exhibits Hannah Lupton Reinhard's crystal-embellished fantasy realism.

This summer, the Green Family Art Foundation presents *Hannah Lupton Reinhard: A House of Stars and Angels* featuring a collection of the artist's work over the past four years. "The paintings were not made to be seen together so the title feels very broad and very descriptive. The stars could be the rhinestones and the angels could be the figures," says Lupton Reinhard. But it's the story behind each that aligns them so spectacularly.

"As a kid I was always drawing weird-looking figures. In middle and high school, I continued drawing and painting, but I always thought it was not a serious thing. When I studied art history at Berkeley, I realized I was super wrong: I wanted to be one of the artists that people might study. I wanted to do this full time, but not here."

So she left Berkeley, moved home, and used the unstructured environment to make paintings and build a portfolio. After a year she was ready to make a career of it and transferred to RISD, which "totally solidified it." There she worked on large-scale, "impressive" works and brought Shabbat to the campus, chasing away that "scary and mean" East Coast feeling. *The Last Sunset* nods to these celebratory rituals.

Perhaps the biggest turning point at RISD was the discovery of the "crystal palace"—a walk-in closet home to a Swarovski crystal emporium donated to the RISD furniture department and accessible to those students. She recalls thinking, "I know I need to have access to this, but I don't know what I am going to do with them yet." Eventually, she found her way to the crystal palace, enchanted by the treasures. This became a defining moment in her practice. She began applying crystals to the canvas, a gesture she describes as defacing. This final bedazzled layer adds to what she calls fantasy realism, her signature today.

Covid brought her home again in 2020, and she finished her senior year online. She was glad to be back to the sunshine, however, and the return to her studio (her parents' garage on a cul-de-sac in Orange County) wasn't so bad. Her best friend lived next door. "Covid absolutely changed my practice and the way I was making and thinking about paintings. I didn't have the same resources I had at RISD, and nothing was open. I started painting my sisters using warmer colors." Many of Lupton Reinhard's paintings

feature female figures embraced. Overwhelmed in affection, she clearly knows these women, who are her sisters and friends. Through this, her paintings became more "personal, slow, and less about scale and density and more about portraiture, and honest in a way."

She thinks about depicting things in both a literal and an abstract way. "Now it's been stripped down to Jewish femininity, it's become much more abstract, and I'm currently using the veil as a prop—so representative to my relationship with being Jewish and with Jewish femininity and what it means to cover ourselves up and hide ourselves. What it means to be modest or not in 2022 LA."

But within these luminous paintings, technically masterful yet mysterious, with hypnotic unsettling hues, she investigates duality. She thinks about beauty and the grotesque. "The paintings present themselves as beautiful, but when you get closer, they are not as beautiful and feminine."

Today the artist lives in Los Feliz and works from her studio in LA, near the fashion district, with wholesale fabrics, beads, and rhinestones within walking distance. The crystal palace is in the past, but she is slowly buying rhinestones and refining their use. "Almost like painting with rhinestones, pointillism with rhinestones. You're taking an oil painting that's fine art, and you're putting something on it that is craft, that is low art and lowbrow or for children or girly. It's kind of funny because it's going to take 30 to 40 hours to do it. And that's another one of the paradoxes."

Presently, she feels like her painting practice, "is like what I was doing at RISD, but I'm allowing my paintings to breathe. It's about how the painting is made, built up, and what textures I am using. It can be this intimate image that has its own complications on a microcosmic scale. There's a fantastical quality to them. They feel familiar but not to our world."

Hannah Lupton Reinhard: A House of Stars and Angels, and *Painters Painting Painters*, are on view Jun. 4–Sep. 25 at the Green Family Art Foundation in River Bend. **—Terri Provencal**

From left: Hannah Lupton Reinhard, *Are You There?*, 2021, oil and Swarovski crystals on canvas, 36 x 24 in.; Hannah Lupton Reinhard, *The Last Sunset*, 2020, oil on canvas, 66 x 54 in.; Hannah Lupton Reinhard, *Miriam's Breath and a Visiting Soul*, 2022, oil and Swarovski crystals on canvas, 60 x 36 in.