

American Eden

The Mohonk wilderness in upstate New York has remained untouched since 1869. Nestled between the Catskills and the Hudson River, its lush hills roll undisturbed by over a century of history. It is within such time capsules of nature that Michael Abrams' paintings find their place and time.

Michael Abrams grew up in Rensselaer County, in a home perched above the majestic greenery of the Hudson River Valley. This image of sprawling, fertile land has remained imprinted in Abrams' mind during the decades that he has spent painting in the brick-and-cement landscape of Manhattan.

In his urban studio, Abrams re-creates the visual gems of his childhood on the Hudson. Abrams bases his paintings on his memory, rather than on straightforward topography. Superfluous details melt away as the pasture seeps freely into the warm, summer sky. These minimally bare landscapes seem to be at once recognizable destinations and intangible color fields. In this way, Abrams bridges the romanticism of the 19th century Hudson River School with the contemporary dialogue of abstraction.

Abrams' painting of the Mohonk valley (next page) sweeps its viewer up into the puffs of dewy clouds that hover over the land. From a birds-eye-view, this foggy Eden of Americana offers a timeless abode for our eyes. In paintings such as this, Abrams nostalgically invents environments that are hybrids of the lands we see and the lands we remember.