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Upgo, oil on linen, 72" x 90", 2008

Eva Lundsager, Greenberg Van Doren, New York

By Morgan Falconer

Although the paint handling is broad and energetic in the 16 quasi-abstract oils Eva Lundsager recently showed (all works 2008), she also means to record observed effects, both meteorological and topographical. In *Not Nearly Heaven* (72 by 90 inches), a slope of blood red occupies the bottom of the canvas, while at the top, cloudlike forms give way to a cascade of tumbling squiggles, as if they were raining party streamers. In *Upgo* (72 by 90 inches), the suggestion is of land—or rather, its borderline with water: tangled dark blue loops describe what looks like the shore of an inlet, and bands of uneven red strokes evoke fields of ploughed and sun-baked earth. For both pictures Lundsager's process itself contributes to fashioning metaphors of atmospheric phenomena. In *Not Nearly Heaven*, as in many of the other canvases, the artist appears to have painted the "land" and then turned the canvas so as to allow the paint to drip down across the "sky" like pouring rain.

Back in 2005, Greenberg Van Doren paired Lundsager with Hans Hofmann in a purposefully cross-generational exhibition; the match was well conceived, but judging by her latest work, the 48-year-old, St. Louis-based Lundsager could show alongside Philip Guston with equal success. She often employs small areas of dots, which introduce a comic, cartoonlike quality, and the hues in her skies are subtly modulated. Both are traits found in Guston's work, albeit at separate points in his career. And Oskar Kokoschka or Jack Yeats, the Irish modernist, would also have chimed with her painting, given its fantastical, expressive and changeable nature.

Lundsager's greatest challenge is to control the chaos she unleashes. In the larger canvases she manages this with aplomb, whereas in the smaller ones she uses the same broad treatment to create more abstract impressions that lack the suggestive power of the bigger works. Also on view was a series of two dozen watercolors, "Ascendosphere," in which a palette of ice-cream hues—pink, lime, magenta and sunny yellow—describes a landscape interrupted by a form like a mushroom cloud, or a geyser shooting up and dissolving into steam. The result is delicious yet disturbing.