

# GLADSTONE GALLERY

Sarah Lehrer-Graiwer, "Critics' Picks," *Artforum*, October 17, 2013

## ARTFORUM



Maureen Gallace, *Early September*, 2013, oil on panel, 11 x 14".

LOS ANGELES

**Maureen Gallace**

OVERDUIN & CO.

6693 Sunset Boulevard

September 15–October 26, 2013

The fourteen small paintings in Maureen Gallace's first exhibition at the gallery are sly heartbreakers. Depopulated and seemingly bucolic postcard scenes—nine of the New England real estate connoisseur's typically remote houses, three of related beachscapes, and two of flowering rosebushes—lull the viewer into the sunny idyll of posh vacation sedation.

The pale heather blue that sloshes in loose strokes across the foreground of *Beach / Wave*, 2013, exactly simulates the thin, reflective waters of the receding tide as it drains over wet sand. While the layered patchwork of greens, wine reds, and dusty pinks in *Red Roses*, 2013, shows off its true finery when viewed at an angle in which every mark becomes another unit of interlocking sheen. Blocked-in tone succinctly describes depth inside the gray-and-white-trimmed barn house at the center of *Early September*, 2013, as surrounding bushes pop in spasmodic bursts and a grand tree in the background explodes in a jarring if

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contained blast of white sunlight. Every dab and lick, at once flagrantly superficial and precisely nailing illusion, fits into a strict economy of marks that activates more with fewer strokes and concentrates potency in the manner of Manet and Monet. The vast white wall space around each picture further sets off this compact intensity.

Gallace's practice, for the past two decades, has continued to be a rigorous regional and seasonal study of the natural habitat of a certain rarified species of the eastern seaboard elite. (Looking is like reading Julie Hecht's short stories, which concern the same locale and demographics.) But Gallace's work also carefully composes an evolving sense of desolation, at once inviting and unnerving, that increasingly speaks to absence, vacancy, foreclosure, wealth gaps, and the growing unaffordability of American home ownership, as well as the precarious future of seaside living in an age of rising tides and superstorms. What has always been introverted, civilized, and blissfully lonesome in the artist's landscape-as-still-life project seems exceedingly touching and almost unbearably heavy today.