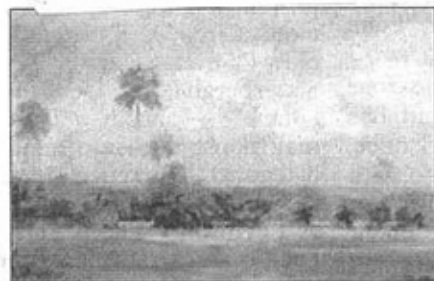


# Arts

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HERALD-TRIBUNE

SUNDAY, JULY 13, 2003



COURTESY PHOTO

"Orange Lake," by Heidi Edwards, is one of the exhibits on view in "Landscape."

## Exhibit elicits natural response

By KEVIN COSTELLO  
CORRESPONDENT

SARASOTA — American landscape painting began with the Republic and continues to grip the imagination of today's artists.

The Allyn Gallup Contemporary Art/Mira Mar Gallery examines this continuing fascination in "Landscape," a exhibition of painting and prints in which 20 contemporary artists record their responses to nature.

The exhibit shows diversity of styles, intentions and a level of quality rarely seen in local galleries. Among the best known artists are April Gornick, Leslie Lerner and Judy Pfaff.

The first American landscape paintings celebrated the virgin wilderness. They were illustrations of English philosopher John Locke's Edenic sentiment that "In the beginning, all the world was America." Pastoral scenes followed with the westward expansion of farming; then came the picturesque interpretation of mechanized agriculture.

In the early 20th century, the romance continued with heroic images of Great Depression farmers and bucolic cornucopias by Works Progress Administration artists on the walls of government buildings. The



COURTESY PHOTO

April Gornick's "French Waterway" is one of the paintings on display at "Landscape."

## Exhibit extols 'Landscape'

LANDSCAPE FROM 1G

spatial sense of surrealism and post-war abstraction hint at the epic landscapes of the previous century.

All those realizations implied the American sense of the sublime in the land — a feeling of God in every tree and sunset. The poet Wordsworth expressed the feeling for nature as evidence of the "awful presence of an unseen Power."

America, being a country without a state religion, used these sentiments to create for itself a nondenominational cult of a divine presence in nature. Americans determined that it was their "manifest destiny" to explore and tame the expanses of the continent to celebrate this emotionalized attitude.

Contemporary society continues to find cultural cohesion in love of the environment. Usually referred to as Pantheism, this philosophy considers God and the Universe identical. "Landscape" shows paintings and prints that adhere to Pantheism, some representational and some abstracted interpretations.

An example of the former is Heidi Edwards' "Orange Lake" (oil on canvas). A tone poem of eight horizontal bands of saturated color, the

### DETAILS

#### Landscape

Opens July 15 and continues through Sept. 15 at Allyn Gallup Contemporary Art/Mira Mar Gallery, 1284 N. Palm Ave., Sarasota. Call 366-2093.

painting links land to sky with five tall palm trees, giving the composition scale, space and linear rhythm.

Judy Pfaff's photogravure "Multnomah," depicts two realistic views of the same forest. Each half delves into the illusionistic space from a different perspective. Pfaff balances this diptych by unifying the two views as one (figure/ground) relationship within the composition.

By comparison, April Gornick's simplified forms in "French Waterway" (lithograph) come close to abstraction. Appropriating the conventions of 17th century Dutch landscape painting, she reduces a field with an irrigation channel flowing through a grove of trees into a balanced arrangement of biomorphic forms.

"Landscape" is not an exhaustive compendium of its subject, but an enjoyable, quiet offering of what can still be achieved with one of America's most enduring artistic traditions.