

Melanie Daniel

Here a Dead Leaf Fell

January 16 - February 14, 2026

ASYA
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GALLERY

Asya Geisberg Gallery is pleased to announce "Here a Dead Leaf Fell," an exhibition of paintings by **Melanie Daniel**. While long interested in vibrantly contrary colors, idiosyncratic patterns, and clashing styles, here Daniel eschews a formulaic approach. The entire exhibition thrums with a feverish nature-world. And yet, each painting remains still, at a distance from our current moment, in some wrinkle of space-time that seems familiar. The hills and trees endure as memory, and among them a small cloaked female protagonist acts as a keystone for the narrative to unfold. Is she chanting a message of warning about human interference? A stand-in for the artist, or perhaps the viewer, bearing witness to the earth's glory? Daniel's newest series doesn't settle for clarity, and lets the viewer luxuriate in her ancient yet futuristic landscapes pulsating radioactively. With mythic resonance, the paintings unfold as folk tales from the future.

Daniel has often played with embedding her figures into the landscape, and here the strategy grows symbolic legs. A hatted woman, in a sort of Stone age sheath or medieval cloak, hovers in the paintings - sometimes camouflaged as in "The Unseen," or peeking out from a flurry of leaves, or at the threshold from water to earth. She could be a derelict deity, or oracular truthteller. Animals and birds such as wolves, moths, crows, and sparrows add symbolic import. Daniel's throbbing brushstrokes unify what is above and below, the micro- and macrocosmos, providing equal footing for the creatures and lone figures. In "Sentinel," a regal figure with a moth headdress oversees a teeming patterned forest. "Starfisher" shows a more ordinary woman at the precipice between the night sky and its reflection in the lake - another mirrored space - collecting the light of dying stars. Mushrooms appear in several paintings, hinting at the mycelial cycle of regeneration, with a halo effect of a super-moon trembling behind "Grieving Sparrows".

The exhibition builds to a crescendo of the interdependence of nature and humanity in two visually opposite works. In "Scale, Soil, and Bone-Creaks," a carefully placed maiden lies in the soil, growing roots like Demeter, while a wolf stands guard above, and a coiled snake underneath, Edenic perhaps. The composition and patterning recall medieval illustrations or tapestries, with tree limbs and fungi tightly focused around a central axis. Conversely, in the titular "Here a Dead Leaf Fell", an autumnal palette hides a chaotic dervish of manic leaves within which a crowned head gazes imperiously, a witness to the maelstrom behind her. The horned headdress reads as prehistoric or pagan, a talisman to ward off evil spirits or for fertility, we aren't meant to know.

As the artist states, "As science endeavors to forge ahead, i.e. with A.I. or Starlink, leaves still fall to the forest floor where they decay and become part of the soil. The leaf is committed to follow nature's binding order and so are we." Daniel offers greater sentience to the participants of this process, animating each leaf, bird, or mountain top with her signature symphonic painting style, as her shamanic figure navigates her not quite idylls before we humans obfuscate our land entirely.



Melanie Daniel
Messengers of Things Passed, 2025
Oil on canvas
27h x 24w in



Melanie Daniel
Starfisher, 2025
Oil on canvas
40h x 40w in

After studies in Canada, Melanie Daniel completed her BFA and MFA at Bezalel Academy, Israel. Solo exhibitions include Maybaum Gallery, San Francisco, Galleri Christoffer Egelund, Copenhagen, Denmark, Hiro Hiro Art Space, Taipei, Taiwan, Mindy Solomon Gallery, Miami, the Grand Rapids Art Museum, Michigan, the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel, Ashod Museum of Art, Israel, Shulamit Gallery, Los Angeles, and Kelowna Art Gallery, BC, among others. Her work is included in collections such as the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Harvard Business School, and the Brandes Family Art Collection. She has received press in publications such as The New York Times, Harper's Magazine, Artnet, Border Crossings Magazine, Young Space New York, Maake Magazine, Newsweek, Frieze, Haaretz, CBC/Radio Canada, Beautiful Decay, and the Artists Magazine. Daniel is the recipient of a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant, a New York Foundation for the Arts Grant, the 2009 Rappaport Prize for a Young Israeli Painter, a Creative Capital Grant, the NARS Foundation Residency in New York City, and the Padnos Distinguished Artist-in-Residence at Grand Valley State University, MI.