

**Suzanne Kuhn**

*Bill Maynes Gallery  
529 West 20th Street  
Chelsea  
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Among the things cropping up in the New York art world with increasingly regularity are the names, and works, of several younger painters from Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands. All seem to be prone to some form of fantasy-laced, stylistically nostalgic, manually dexterous and intermittently illustrational realism. The efforts of the 30-something German painter Suzanne Kuhn, seen in her first show in New York, meet many of the same criteria.

Ms. Kuhn, who is from Leipzig, works with and against the devotion to nature that courses through Northern European art, from the exactitude of Dürer to the Romanticism of Caspar David Friedrich and beyond. Her dark primeval forests, more drawn than painted, are deftly rendered in a restricted palette of black, white and several shades of green. They feature the traditional elements: towering oaks, tumbling waterfalls, burbling streams, shimmering, magically white mountains and lots of detailed undergrowth.

But everything is oddly spiked and slanted and in motion. In front of her images the wild calligraphy of Chinese landscape painting can come to mind, along with German woodcuts, Disney cartoons, the visionary graphic style of Charles Burchfield, old-fashioned wallpaper and tapestry designs.

Into these situations, Ms. Kuhn inserts hints of human involvement in the form of real people — a man on a mountaintop in "White Mountain," a man with a baby carriage in "Observing the Distant Mountain" — and kitschy medallions of happy rucksack-toting wanderers. There are also scatterings of fallen trees, stumps and logs that may or may not be due to natural causes.

In certain paintings, especially "Zweistromland," the dissonances and inconsistencies increase, and the captivating lunacy at the core of Ms. Kuhn's sensibility comes out

he open.

ROBERTA SMITH