

MORGAN LEHMAN

535 West 22nd Street, New York, New York 10011

TWO COATS OF PAINT

May 1, 2016

Amy Lincoln's twilight zone

9:21 AM Sharon Butler



Amy Lincoln, Pink Caladium, 2016, acrylic on panel, 20 x 16 inches.

Contributed by Jonathan Stevenson

Luminous, though an overused adjective in art writing, is an apt one for Amy Lincoln's edgy new paintings mainly of plants, on display at Morgan Lehman in Chelsea. Their vivid color, exacting line, and exotic detail leap out at the viewer, so that the initial

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Amy Lincoln, *Variegated Rubber Plant*, 2016, acrylic on panel, 20 x 16 inches.

impression is straightforwardly Rousseau-esque, maybe with a nod to earnest Regionalist and Symbolist landscape painters. Her work isn't merely gorgeous or wistful. She imparts to her paintings an arch, expansive ambivalence that gives them depth, mystery, and a little darkness.

The veins of her *Pink Caladium*, for instance, look alive and vaguely parasitic, as though its beauty may imminently succumb to kinetic forces. Some of the plants in *Veranda Study* appear predatory amid innocent species that camouflage them. There's little doubting that the variegated rubber plant in the eponymous painting is in peril from the encroaching purple plant. In *Purple Taro*, the two plants flank the foreground like baleful sentries. She admits that her plants are "a little monstrous," her skies "unnaturally vivid." And these pieces straddle the line

between the sublime hallucinations that Leary talked about and the nasty, bad-trip kind.



Amy Lincoln, *Veranda Study*, acrylic on panel, 8 x 10 inches.

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Amy Lincoln, *Bloodleaf Study*, 2016, acrylic on panel, 10 x 8 inches.



Amy Lincoln, *Spring Moonlight*, acrylic on panel, 34 x 24 inches.

Or, as Rod Serling might have put it, between “the pit of man’s fears and the summit of his knowledge.” Lincoln’s sensibility seems akin to that of *The Twilight Zone*: she is not content only with beauty, and isn’t credulous enough to take it at face value. Where she finds that quality, there is invariably drama -- something sinister lurking or hovering that is not fully known. The title *Spring Moonlight* waxes pastoral, but it’s ironic rather than naive: the celestial orb at the center of the canvas is not immediately identifiable as the moon, and seems to pulse radioactively.

These paintings, smart and probing as they are visually striking and technically accomplished, scratch the itch at the juncture of perception and imagination. And Lincoln appears to have the mind and talent to apply that faculty well beyond the realm of horticulture.

"Amy Lincoln," Morgan Lehman, Chelsea, New York, NY. Through May 7, 2016.