

Earthward Bound

[D. Dominick Lombardi](#)



Thomas Frontini, *Near the Glacier* (2013) oil on panel, 33” x 45” (courtesy of the artist)

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The [Skylight Gallery](#) offers two intimate spaces that are connected by a narrow hall situated at the top of an even narrower stair. Often times, spaces like this can add a level of comfort as they feel more ‘familiar,’ closer to most of our own living areas than say the typical large white box that you will find in a good portion of Chelsea. On the other hand, selecting work and installing in a more repurposed, or mixed-use type space can be tricky. Even varying wall surfaces come into play - ceiling heights, lighting - they can all be problems for the less experienced curator.

David Gibson, the current exhibition’s organizer handles this space well by taping into its full potential. He does this primarily, by working with scale and subject matter to create serviceable references - jumping off points for viewer’s thoughts and focus to be taken in and away through the art. For *EARTHWARD*, Gibson presents his take on how the environment, with all its frailties, stresses and beauty, affects the psyche of a choice selection of contemporary artists. Thomas Frontini creates very successful paintings by combining Surrealist tendencies and vibrant atmospheres with a smattering of kitsch, topped with a cause to champion. His art takes us into the future where trees are few and far between as they cling to floating or land-bound rock islands set against distant horizons. Despite their plight, the trees show an unshakable strength built upon a glimmer of hope that finding a safe and more forgiving resting place is always and forever a possibility. *Near the Glacier* (2013) is Frontini’s tour de force. Here we see, floating toward a distant daytime moon, two bark-less trees in a lover’s embrace. Their care and devotion has its prize - a crown of bright cranberry red leaves - that seems to give them their unmistakable buoyancy as they stand precariously, situated atop what looks to be an overly reflective, very colorful block of ice or some such substance. An accomplished painter, Frontini will delight you with his varied technique and surprising palette.

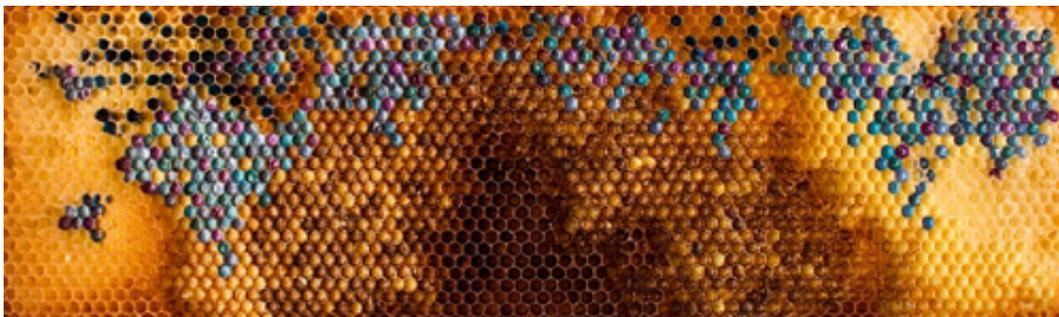
Charles Koegel’s indicates our natural environment in the form of sporadic

tufts of real grass that find their way through the tiny cracks and crevices of fauve wooden planks covered with peeling paint and collage. The overall effect created by the mixed, highly tactile elements the artist paints and places is pleasing to the eye and mind, while his handiwork completely hides the fact that these are actually works on canvas - not wood.



Elisabeth Condon, *Looking East, I Felt You With Me* (2010-11), acrylic on linen, 20” x 24”, (courtesy Lesley Heller Workspace)

Elizabeth Condon takes us a step back, way back, so we can view our natural world as a mix of patterns and waves. Her mesmerizing juxtapositions, and her ability to link various natural elements with ‘unnatural’ color and expressive brushwork is her true talent. *Looking East, I Felt You With Me* (2010-11), which blends equally figuration and abstraction, is like a waking dream. A birdhouse, wispy trees and tree branches, patches of orange, green brown and yellow all set against a backdrop of bold waves and stripes of color just might allow your mind wonder long after you exit the exhibit and return to the sidewalk below.



Alysha Colangeli, *FD And C Blue* (2013) honey comb, crystallized honey, acrylic paint and plastic, 20 1/2" x 26 1/2", (courtesy of the artist)

Rounding out the show are Alysha Colangeli's collaborations with bees, Sandy Litchfield's city-parkscape and the conceptual collages of Peter Hutchinson. The exhibition runs through November 30th.