

## Una Ursprung

Alsace, France

Una Ursprung's work is filled with mountains, forests, trees, and flowers. Born in Taipei, the artist has spent much of her life between Taiwan, France, and Switzerland, constantly refreshing her appreciation for sprawling natural landscapes. In these countries, Ursprung enjoyed pastoral, tranquil lifestyles which have inspired her sublime, airy works.

Her canvases are dual-layered: a highly realistic natural background is superimposed by a layer of abstract detail, created using oils or acrylic spray paint. Sometimes these abstract details look like pastel oil spills; large, colourful shapes pooling on the surface. At other times, the marks made by the artist are shorter, finer lines, more like microscopic images of bacteria. The artist refers to this layer as a way to capture pollution, whether it be the man-made variety or the fleeting objects in the air, like dust, insects, or leaves, as in her forest sketches. These shapes are trapped in suspension, freezing the moment in front of us and immortalising the ever-changing natural landscape.

The spray-painted layer adds to the atmosphere of her landscapes, making them seem deeper and more real,

while paradoxically appearing to be flat. The spray is applied with a loose control, matching the artist's mission to depict, rather than conquer, the landscapes she shows. While Ursprung captures a moment in nature, the contrast of her two layers (one conventional and naturalistic, one wild and abstract) reminds us that the natural world remains elusive. Unlike traditional landscape painters of the past, Ursprung does not pretend to have mastered her scenes, rather she shows them as ever-changing, unconquerable scenes deserving of our awe.

These paintings are conceptually more complex than a quick once-over viewing would suggest: they're not landscapes interrupted by separate, abstract motifs, they're a completed whole, made up by a balance of the two styles.

Ursprung has found a way to harmonise the two artistic approaches that appeal to her most and, by combining the abstract with the realistic, challenges us with a version of nature that is both tangible and splendid.

Words by Verity Babbs.

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Mono-Folding Brush, oil on linen, 60x70 cm, 2020

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Mono-Folding Twice, oil on canvas, 60x70 cm, 2020

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Brush-Folding, oil on canvas, 60x70 cm, 2020