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ANGIE RENFRO

Power in minimalism

Angie Renfro aims to transform things that aren't generally considered pretty into beauties to behold with her paintings. The factory in *When the Tide Goes Out* contains a sort of fragility because of the blank space surrounding it and soft burnt orange and golden brushstrokes that compose its structure. A lone giant bison in *Bison 5* seems more friendly than menacing, as paint drips soften its strength, and its peering visage stares at the viewer. Weeds become delicate in *Seeing You Again*, as the subject is dotted by rosy flowers sprouting from the plant. Renfro's work is more about the mood than it is the subject matter, evident in her current collection of more than 10 pieces at Terzian Galleries in Park City, Utah.

"It's kind of like rooting for the underdog," the 36-year-old artist from Chicago says. "I feel like there's a sense of longing to my work, a sense of peacefulness and wistfulness. I hope people find the opposite nature of my work compelling in the way I find it compelling, like the play of the positive and negative and the energy of the brushstrokes with the peacefulness of the composition."

Renfro says she's currently bouncing between series, such as works including bison, weeds and bees, and her current collection is a sampler of all of them. She says her work is becoming more and more minimal, and the ample inclusion of blank space in her works demonstrates that.

Renfro finds inspiration through road trips, such as her discovery of the Detroit factory that became the subject for *When the Tide Goes Out*, and often works off photographs. A trip to the Brookfield Zoo in Illinois provided plenty to capture for her bison series.

She then paints her subjects using a palette knife and brush, using loose strokes and dripping techniques to create the effect that time is passing. She's visually interested in having the



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underpainting show through, conveying a sense there's more under the surface of her subjects.

"It kind of speaks to the things that aren't said," Renfro says. "There's a story that's not being told, which I think adds a layer of interest to the pieces."

Renfro is inspired by the minimalism of Richard Diebenkorn and the moodiness of Edward Hopper in their works, and she says her background as an industrial designer influences her approach to painting.

"I think having a small background in design made me appreciate simplicity and minimalism, because I feel like simplicity speaks a little louder than something that's very busy," Renfro says. "I'm learning about myself that in my work in the past, one of the features that has been really large is the sky space. I'm starting to indulge in that, and that's where isolating the subject has come from. I enjoy painting the negative space so much, and I'm allowing myself to do that more." ●



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1
Wayward, oil on
canvas, 30 x 40"

2
Seeing You Again,
oil on canvas, 36 x 24"

3
When the Tide Goes Out,
oil on canvas, 48 x 60"

4
Bison 5, oil on
canvas, 40 x 30"

5
Bees 47, oil on
canvas, 36 x 36"