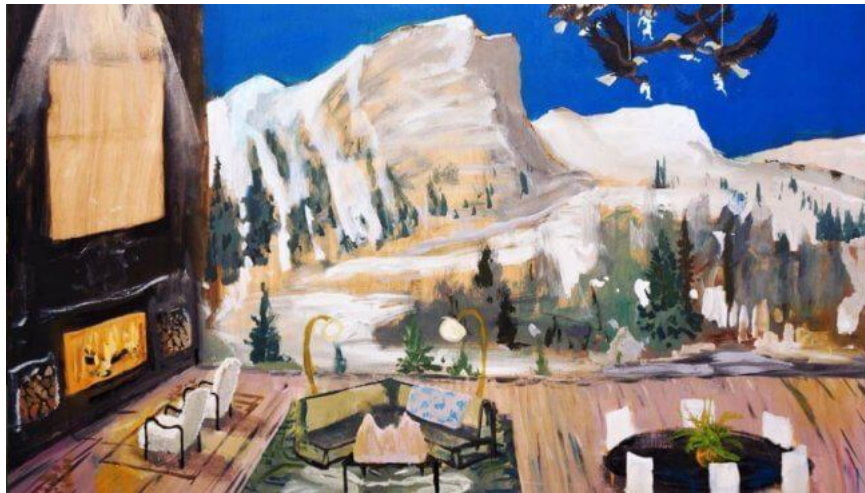




“DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR” BY JOHNNY DEFEO

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By Johnny DeFeo



At any time, I can head to the middle of the forest and dive into a river to wash off in cool, flowing water owned by each and every one of us. Knowing I have this freedom is how I get through my day, and that freedom hinges on access to America’s public lands.

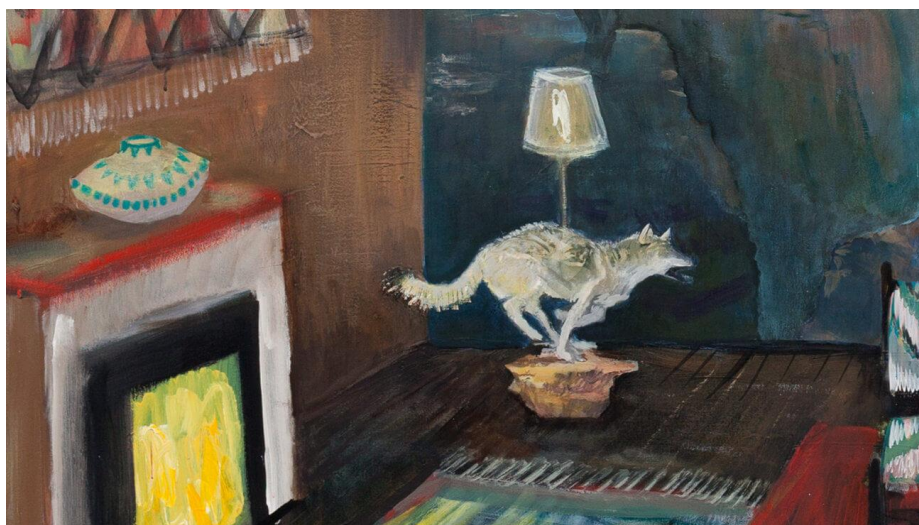




I use painting as a means of parsing through my thoughts and exploring the world. Mostly I paint landscapes. The places we spend time in become inextricably entangled within us. I focus on the unquantifiable and unprovable characteristics of a thing, the feeling of it. Rather than taking photos or sketching, I do my best to commit a place to my memory and later recall it in paint with aims of creating a souvenir- an object to help to remember. By working from memory, it is easier to pick out the essentials, and to emphasize the details that stood out so vividly. I hope to create paintings that can transport you to a remarkable place or time your own life, or help you imagine somewhere wonderful.



In this series of paintings called 'The Department of the Interior,' specifically, I ruminate on the uncertain future of America's public lands. Likely, without intervention, bits of it will slowly be degraded or destroyed. These paintings are an attempt to reconcile my love for these places and the news of their troubles. Often, I worry that all of my favorite places will end up as someone's fenced backyard.



In my paintings, I imagine homes, and the people who might buy them, and how they might be decorated and designed. Homes filled with relics of the natural world, patterned textiles, and wildlife decor, side-by-side with views of the magnificent lands from which they are hewn. For the public, closed off from these now private spaces, these homes are a nightmare, but from inside the living room it would be hard to argue that it's a pretty great view, and therein lies the problem.





Johnny DeFeo lives and works in Denver, CO (but that doesn't mean he wouldn't love to meet you in your favorite fishing spot or mountain bike trail anywhere in the country). You can find him on Instagram @johnnycakesdefeo and at www.johnndefeo.com. Works can be purchased through Visions West Contemporary, www.visionswestcontemporary.com

