

Larry Groff

# LARRY GROFF

## *Auguries*

May 21 - June 15 2019

Prince Street Gallery  
530 West 25th Street 4th Floor  
New York, NY 10001

The first stanza of William Blake's famous poem, *Auguries of Innocence*, is the exhibition's theme for these oil paintings that were completed over the past two years.

*To See a World in a Grain of Sand  
And Heaven in a Wild Flower  
Hold Infinity in the Palm of Your Hand  
And Eternity in an Hour*

The 2016 United States presidential election did not augur well for our future. As a way of coping with our uncertain times, I started to explore imagination-based imagery, which I felt could offer a greater range of expression and subject matter than my previous observation-based landscapes. Perceptual painting remains very important to my work but the works in this exhibition are all studio inventions.

Famous European artists like Nicolas Poussin and Tintoretto are said to have made stage sets and arranged wax or clay maquettes to study composition and lighting for paintings. Computers today can easily replicate this practice.



*Auguries*, 36 x 60 inches, oil on canvas, 2019



*Blue Rondo*, 16 x 16 inches, oil on linen, 2018



*Earthly Mothers Waiting*, 42 x 32 inches, oil on linen, 2019

After graduate school at Boston University, I supported my painting working as a nurse. In 1999, I left nursing, taught myself 3D computer animation and worked as a medical animator. Using 3D software is rarely associated with traditional painting as it is considered more relevant for entertainment or corporate industries for their more commercial aesthetics. As a result, its use is often considered antithetical to fine art making. However, I came to see it as another useful tool (with a rather steep learning curve) in the painter's visualization process. Like Tintoretto, I used it to observe the multiple compositional possibilities and different viewpoints of a subject, such as how an arrangement of forms might look like from above or below.

I found the process of digitally sculpting and painting forms highly engaging but this calculating technical approach lacked the adventure and emotions of painting onsite. However, being able to control virtually any aspect of form, light, texture, color, and atmosphere to make a world of your own in which to paint, just by looking at a high-resolution monitor, was very compelling. Once the computer imagery was finished and the basics of the scene painted onto the canvas, I turned off the computer and paint from memory or imagination. This process was critical as it allowed the painting to move forward independently from the digital source, let a new life evolve from the needs of the oil painting, and it was not constrained to the original digital concept. The finished painting often looks very different from the original source. Painting landscapes or still life can be a similar process where the scene's visual information can be summarized and edited. In this way, the painting becomes more important to look at than the motif and conveys feelings better.



*No Translation Available*, 14 x 16 inches, oil on linen, 2019

Initially, I wanted to make paintings that were inspired by early modernist sculpture, like that of Jacques Lipchitz and David Smith. I digitally sculpted arrangements of forms like those seen in the paintings, *Spinning in His Grin*, *Repotting Time*, and *The Stonecutter's Grotto*. However, I changed directions after discovering Dr. Gary Greenberg's book, *A Grain of Sand*, with his photographs of highly magnified sand grains. The book showed the incredible range of translucent colors and shapes in sand that eons of tumbling forces have sculpted into exciting potentials for expression and abstraction. Biogenic particles, like shell fragments and microscopic foram, are common components of sand and their unusual shapes can suggest anthropomorphic qualities or moods. I modeled and sculpted my own sand grain-like forms and arranged them as if I was blocking figures out on a stage set or setting up a still life. Making a verifiably accurate representation of any particular sand grain was never a goal—instead, I wanted to set up a scene that might give life to a painting. I asked myself how the sand grain could play a role in the painting's visual drama of color, light, and shape. Couldn't this particular microscopic grouping of sand have once happened somewhere during the eons amongst the quintillions of sand grains on our planet?



*A Hopeful Sign*, 9 x 12 inches, oil on panel, 2018



*Three Realms*, 20 x 16 inches, oil on linen, 2019

It is interesting to note that sand, one of the most common materials on earth and critical to our civilization, is not infinite. Computers and cell phones are made possible through the use of silicon sand. Sand helps build the glass, concrete, and asphalt roads for our cities. Increasingly, alarms have sounded over the shortage of sand used in construction and even the sand on our beaches is becoming exhausted in many places. Mountains erode and become grains of sand just as civilizations eventually crumble. No matter how big we are, we all return to dust. The macrocosm is seen in the microcosm like a fractal. Infinity can be held in the palm of your hand.

In ancient Rome, augurs often made important political and military decisions. These officials had a priest-like status and interpreted the gods' wishes from watching the random movements of birds. Eventually, the Romans figured out that augurs and their auguries were bogus and started to trust their own decisions. This show's title, *Auguries*, only portends the future direction my painting is taking, and, regretfully, lacks any divination from birds or otherwise for our future. However, viewers are encouraged to look closely at these grains of sand and make their own predictions.

-Larry Groff



*Against the Grain*, 16 x 16 inches, oil on linen, 2018-19



*Moment in the Sand World*, 28 x 34 inches, oil on linen, 2018



*A Grain of Truth*, 34 x 28 inches, oil on linen, 2018



*A Moment of Holding*, 20 x 16 inches, oil on linen, 2019



*Spinning in His Grin*, 30 x 42 inches, oil on linen, 2018



*Repotting Time*, 30 x 42 inches, oil on linen, 2018



*The Stonecutter's Grotto*, 28 x 34 inches, oil on linen, 2018-19



*Grains for Giorgio*, 18 x 24 inches, oil on linen, 2019





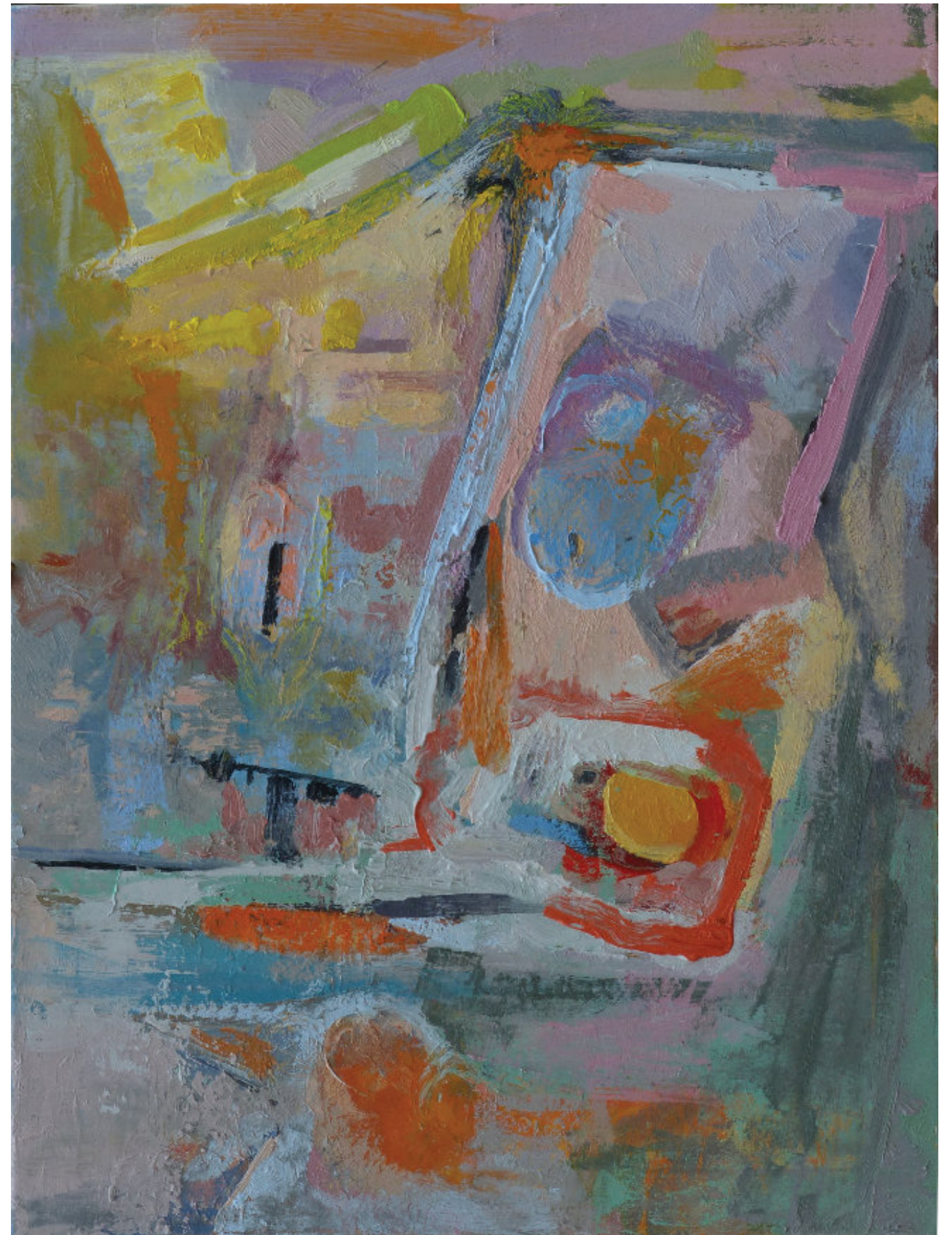
*Microbiome*, 16 x 16 inches, oil on linen, 2019



*Obstacles on the Path*, 16 x 16 inches, oil on linen, 2018-19



*A Good Omen*, 16 x 20 inches, oil on linen, 2019



*Remnants*, 24 x 18 inches, oil on linen, 2019



*The Haruspex' Reading*, 18 x 24 inches, oil on linen, 2018



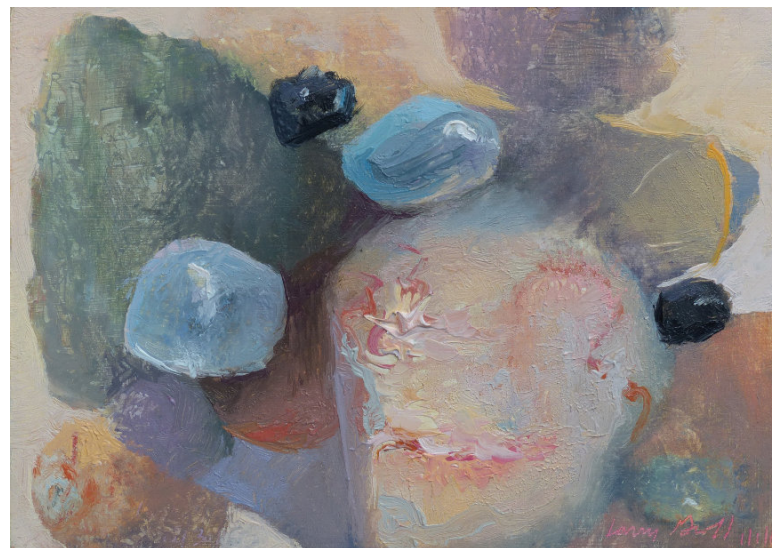
*The Red Cannon*, 24 x 30 inches, oil on linen, 2019



*Blues on Black*, 5 x 7 inches, oil on panel 2018

Larry Groff is a San Diego, Ca. painter who previous to 2007 lived in Boston, Ma. He has exhibited in a number of venues in California, New York, Vermont and Massachusetts. Groff attended the Massachusetts College of Art, Yale University Summer School of Art and Music and Boston University where he received his M.F.A. in painting.

For the past 11 years Groff has been the founder and editor of the “Painting Perceptions” website. The website features his interviews with many established contemporary representational painters around the world as well as many emerging artists nationally. "Painting Perceptions" also showcases videos, reviews, opinion essays, interviews and more by Groff and contributing writers.



*New Year Day Reading*, 5 x 7 inches, oil on panel, 2018

## LARRY GROFF

### Solo and Two-Person Exhibitions

- 2019 *Auguries*, Prince Street Gallery, NYC, NY
- 2018 *Salton Sea Paintings*, Rancho Mirage Library and Observatory, Rancho Mirage, CA
- 2018 *a splash quite unnoticed, Salton Sea paintings*, Santa Ysabel Art Gallery, Santa Ysabel, CA
- 2014 *In and Out of Sight*, Prince Street Gallery, NYC, NY
- 2013 2-Person show, Noel-Baza Fine Art, San Diego, CA
- 2000 University of Massachusetts, Boston, College of Public and Community Service, Boston, MA
- 1992 *Solo Show* - Pooke Gallery Walnut Hill School, Natick, MA

### Exhibitions

- 2019 *Blue Mountain Gallery 2019 Juried Exhibition*- Elisa Jensen, Juror, Blue Mountain Gallery, NYC, NY
- 2017 *Art as Protest*, Orange County Center for Contemporary Art, Santa Ana, CA
- 2017 Bowery Gallery National Competition* - Kyle Staver, Juror, Bowery Gallery, NYC, NY
- Artist Alliance At The Museum 2017*, Oceanside Museum of Art, Oceanside, CA
- Small Works Invitational*, Blue Mountain Gallery, NYC, NY
- 2016 Oceanside Museum of Art, *Artist Alliance Exhibition*, L Street Fine Art Gallery, San Diego
- Small Works Invitational*, Blue Mountain Gallery, NYC, NY
- 4 New Members*, Prince Street Gallery, NYC, NY
- 2015 *From Life*, Santa Ysabel Art Gallery, Santa Ysabel, CA
- Small Works Invitational*, Blue Mountain Gallery, NYC, NY
- San Diego Dreaming* exhibition, Oceanside Museum of Art, Oceanside, CA
- 7th National Juried Show* Juror: Robert Berlind, Prince Street Gallery, NYC, NY
- Under the Same Sky, Contemporary San Diego Landscapes*, Noel-Baza Fine Art, San Diego History Center
- 2013 San Diego Art Institute 52<sup>th</sup> International Juried Exhibition, Juror: Daniel Foster, San Diego, CA
- 2011 *Contemporary Still Life -Jurors' Choice Award*, Copley Society of Art, Boston, MA
- 2011 San Diego Art Institute 51<sup>th</sup> International Juried Exhibition, Juror: Roxana Velasquez Martinez del Campo
- 2010 San Diego Art Institute The Southern California Regional Exhibition, Juror: Andi Campognone
- 2009 Julian Art Gallery, Julian, CA *San Diego Back Country*
- 2009 Bennington Center for the Arts, Bennington, VT *California's Landscapes and Legacy*
- 2009 California Art Club, *Juror's Choice Award*, Blinn House, Women's City Club, Pasadena, CA
- 1995 Sherry French Gallery 24 West 57th Street., NYC, NY, Group Show
- 1995 Clark Gallery, Lincoln, MA Group Show (curated by Alexi Worth)
- 1995 Concord Art Association, Concord, MA Group Show

### Education

- 1991-1993 M.F.A.(Painting) Boston University School for the Arts,
- 1983-1988 B.F.A. (Painting) Massachusetts College of Art, Graduated With Distinction
- 1986 Yale University Summer School of Art and Music

### Awards

- 2013 San Diego Art Institute 52<sup>th</sup> International Juried Exhibition, Hoffman Trust Award
- 2011 Copley Society of Art, *Contemporary Still Life -Jurors' Choice Award*,
- 2009 California Art Club, *Juror's Choice Award*, Blinn House show
- 1986 Ellen Battel Stoeckel Fellowship (Yale University)
- 1986 Donis A. Dondis Scholar Award (Massachusetts College of Art)

### Publication

- 2012 100 Boston Painters, Chawky Frenn, Schiffer Publishing, Atglen, PA
- 2009-Current Owner and Editor of PaintingPerceptions.com



*Galileo On The Beach*, 28 x 34 inches, oil on linen, 2019

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