



regional reviews

A LOOK AT AREA EXHIBITIONS AND OPENINGS

Starr Gallery at the Leventhal-Sidman Jewish Community Center/Newton

BETWEEN SOLACE AND AWE: BEYOND
THE LANDSCAPE

Nine of the eleven artists in this exhibit are painters. The lone printmaker, Kathy Halamka—like the painters [Mary Hughes](#), [Suzanne Hodes](#), and [Beverly Barber](#)—keeps her edges fluid and her drawing open. Photographer Esther Pullman focuses with descriptive precision and, like painter David Faust, gives point of view and drama of scale psychological weight.

Both Pullman and Faust are specific about place without limiting the experience of the place they have depicted. Pullman's large color photographs are hung side by side to create panoramic views of three different greenhouses, and the outside landscape and sky are all the more diaphanous seen through muscular plant stems and blooms. Faust stills his simplified images to an almost eerie sense of foreboding, keeping the particular light and character of a place (an Arlington sidewalk at night; a Virginia riverbank; a snaking two-lane highway in Georgia) and imbuing it with strangely intimate mystery.

The plein air paintings of Kathleen Robbins, Susan Nichter, Beth Balliro, Richard Fox, and Henry Altmann reflect the landscape's universal offerings stated in the title of the show (curated by gallery director Deborah Davidson). By not straining for invention, the artists show they are sure of themselves, genuine and unembarrassed by their awe before the subject. Color is often especially rich, as in the lusty warm greens and ochres of Robbins's oil-on-panel works. If anything at all is wanting in this broadly appealing show, it is the ambitious grandeur of a Gregory Amenoff landscape-derived abstraction or the pure and unaffected pleasure of a daylight-drenched Jane Freilicher view.

—Meredith Fife Day