

# ART SPIEL

Reflections on the work of contemporary artists

MARCH 2, 2023 BY ART SPIEL

## Melanie Daniel at Mindy Solomon SHADOW WEAVING



Artist in studio, 2022

### Featured Artist

The oil paintings featured in [Shadow Weaving](#), Melanie Daniel's second solo show at Mindy Solomon, depict magical landscapes of forests, ponds, and their inhabitants—a moth, a pair of coyotes, a beetle, an occasional mystical spirits. The paintings begin for her as meditations and transform into fleeting environments—both hallucinatory and recognizable. The show runs through March 18th, 2023.

### What would you like to share about the body of work in this show?

When I made these paintings, I had recently finished reading David Abram's *The Spell of the Sensuous*, and it was in the back of my mind. I remember sitting one day in the sun and watching a dung beetle pushing a ball up a sandy hill. It was such a quiet moment and a small thing, but I felt happy just observing this insect's Sisyphean routine. All of my thoughts about art, family, survival, and other perpetual loops in my mind fell away through this minute shift in perspective. This exhibition is about offering another way to look more closely at flora-fauna-human relationships. How do we synch ourselves with the natural world, reconnect our cadence with those of the earth, sea and sky?



Installation View, Mindy Solomon Gallery, Miami, photo courtesy of the gallery

### Please guide us through the show – what are we seeing?

I wanted the compositions to feel as though they were pulled from a dream or an alternate world. Most of the paintings use fluid contours of trees and wild networks of branches, patchwork zones of dots, lines, and zigzags to create quilted landscapes. These are shape-shifting environments, animistic, and point to an interconnected world that is revelatory, mysterious, and magical. I often include ghostly figures but also motifs of butterflies, owls, trees, and watery surroundings, depicted in patterned brushstrokes in patches of light and pulsing shadows.



Melanie Daniel, *Sister and Brother Coyotes*, 2023, oil on canvas, 180 X 140 cm (70.8 X 55 inch)



Melanie Daniel, *Blush and Fade*, 2022, oil on canvas, 129 X 150 cm (50.8 X 59 inch)

One of my favorites is *Sister and Brother Coyotes*, in which the trees magically cast solid orange coyote shapes over a hillside. In the history of painting, the shadow was introduced in order to bring a sense of three-dimensionality to a two-dimensional space. I corrupt this notion by depicting it as a substantial form; the solitary individual or animal encounters their shadow like the weight of their unconscious self as described in Jungian psychology.

*Blush and Fade*, another painting from the exhibition, features a translucent horse and rider, fading semblances of their former bold selves. It is about the passing of youth and the entering of a new era – a world in which humanity has assumed a more modest presence. I want to draw the viewer into a sylvan landscape as an act of hope and restoration; communion with nature as a balm for an ailing civilization.

**Melanie Daniel at Mindy Solomon Gallery 848 NW 22 St, Miami, FL 33127**

**About the Artist:** Born in Victoria, British Columbia, Melanie Daniel is currently working in Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Israel. Daniel's psychedelic, unnatural palette, dense areas of vibrating pattern, and skewed perspectives underscore an uncanny relationship between the subjects and their environment. Drawing heavily from the Canadian landscape and her great appetite for the history and language of painting, the landscapes are interjected with areas of delicate stains and washes contrasted with passages of abstract impasto and intricate patterns to achieve a buzzing visual ecosystem. Daniel's big and strangely beautiful works are cautionary yet hopeful. They show the power of nature, as plants and flowers intermingle with specters and shadows, and threaten to overrun the canvas and envelop the human presence.

<https://artspiel.org/melanie-daniel-at-mindy-solomon-shadow-weaving/>