

EQUINOX GALLERY
3642 Commercial Street
Vancouver, BC V5N 4G2

604.736.2405 t
info@equinoxgallery.com e
www.equinoxgallery.com w

Philippe Raphanel

January 13 – February 17, 2024

Reception for the artist: Saturday January 13, 2-4pm

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Equinox is delighted to launch the 2024 program with an exhibition of new paintings by Vancouver-based artist Philippe Raphanel.

Raphanel draws on a variety of influences to create atmospheric compositions that resist a single interpretation. Since immigrating to Canada from France in 1981, Raphanel has been profoundly affected by the dense wilderness of British Columbia as well as the work of historical Canadian painters such as Emily Carr. While landscape and the natural world are at the core of his practice, Raphanel's paintings present a visual experience that suggests a set of open questions about how nature and its energy reveal themselves. His visual vocabulary includes elements familiar to the forest—branches, nests, leaves—while maintaining a looseness in their application that allows for new forms and associations to emerge.

Raphanel builds up his paintings with very thin coats of acrylic paint, often spending years building hundreds of layers on top of one another in a single painting. By diluting his paints to keep each layer as transparent as possible, Raphanel's surfaces—though dense with many coats of paint—maintain their feeling of lightness and translucency. As layers are applied over time, each painting goes through many stages, often beginning with a bright, warm palette and moving towards more subdued colours. This careful process creates—as Raphanel describes—landscapes which appear to be “submerged”, as the visual circulation inherent in his compositions suggests a forest caught in an invisible current.

Philippe Raphanel received his BFA from l'Ecole Nationale Superieure d'Art Applique in Paris and then immigrated to Vancouver in 1981 where he studied at Emily Carr University of Art + Design. In the 1980s, Raphanel was part of a dynamic group of Vancouver painters known as the Young Romantics, which included Douglas Coupland, Angela Grossmann, Attila Richard Lukacs, Derek Root, among others. His work is represented in public collections such as the Vancouver Art Gallery, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, Global Affairs Canada, as well as numerous private collections. Raphanel is a recipient of the VIVA Award (1996) that recognizes exceptional achievement in the visual arts, and the Tanabe Prize for BC Painters (2017). Philippe Raphanel lives and works in Vancouver, Canada.