

ART IN AMERICA, September 2003
By GERRIT HENRY

Adele Alsop's new Utah-scapes were greeted in the New York media by much burble and gurgle. Words fail us, as Alsop's bipolar stroke and perfervid hues rise, each time, to the picturesque occasion; each canvas is, in short, a love affair with its own physical and spiritual self, like the best love affair, egregiously short and jarringly sweet.

Bierstadt and Blakelock are Alsop's 19th-century predecessors, while the Action painters – especially de Kooning – and Neil Welliver, with whom she studied with at Yale, are her immediate forebears. Alsop proves her painterly peerage as she goes. This is neo-romanticism of the most ambitious sort; the “pathetic fallacy” so dear to the 19th century (that nature distinctly mirrors human hopes, emotions and desires) is here revived with an all-embracing vengeance, mellifluous as it is magical.

Magic, indeed, is the subject of a number of the paintings, a fact that is generally overlooked. In truth, Alsop has a lively interest in all sorts of magical arts, especially astrology. Thus, we shouldn't be too surprised to see, in *Dream of a Dream (Sonno de un sonno)*, 2002, a circle reminiscent both of Matisse's *La danse* and a witch's-sabbat daisy chain, including a leaping panther, geese and swans and nude humans, all topped by a low-lying Utah mountain in rusty reds and siennas.

Still, the purer sorts of landscapes and some glorious still lifes carried the day here. Alsop's abstract figurative technique – for want of a better phraseology – is so precise in its evocations that, as in the 24-by-26-inch *Big Pine Sunset* (2001-02), a mere dot, squiggle, line or loop stands for both itself and its own picturing of itself, making for a kind of abstract symbolism that has pure vision as its vision.

The action painting influence is everywhere to be seen, and what a relief in today's video/installation melee. Still, it's amazing that an artist so well versed in the 20th century should so fluently be able to call up a painter like Rembrandt, in the fulsomeness and acuity of stroke and hue in *Quicksilver Pond* (2002), brusque and brash grays, silvers and whites smartly echoing the title.

The still lifes on view were a small, but choice, lot. Alsop manages to bring her landscape sensibility whole to these pieces, altering neither the intimacy nor the piquancy that are hallmarks of the genre. In the square, medium-scaled *Zinnias in a Passing Thunder Shower*, the ghost of Redon hovers over the flowers, bringing a new, positive meaning to the word “florid.” But it is really Alsop's own spirit that hovers over an, somehow, inhabits all her work. This painter is far and away the most stunning and achieved of her generational peers.

The New York Times, Friday, December 13, 2002
ART IN REVIEW: Adele Alsop
By GRACE GLUECK

The loose, expressive brush strokes of Adele Alsop, a transplanted New Englander living in Utah, conjure up vivid, lush landscapes and still lifes that radiate energy. Trees, purple mountains, restless ponds, blooming desert country, vases and whole gardens of exuberant flowers are celebrated in this sunny, buoyantly wrought work, which seems to spring from action painting.

In “Green Fire,” a gorgeous purple peak is tracked with snow towers above a field made light blue by the mountain’s shadow and strewn with green fir shrubs. Overhead a sky of clear wintry blue proclaims the season. “Irises With Shadows Near and Far” depicts a stand of those tall flowers throwing shadows on the hot white ground in front of them, the colors echoing the nuanced hues of the mountains behind.

Ms. Alsop also knows how to capture light in interior scenes, like the more old-fashioned still life “Fall Flowers With Painted Gourd.” A glass vase of mixed blossoms stands on a shiny table in a dark room next to a blue-flowered gourd. A large rectangle of muted sun coming through a shaded window plays eloquently over it. Her painting makes no particular contemporary pitch, but it’s alive.

The New Yorker, December 23, 2002
GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN: Adele Alsop

If Alsop’s landscapes were exhibited on Twenty-second Street, they would register as parody: sunny flower beds, twilit pines, reflective vistas with titles like “Golden Pond.” Even viewers with respectably transgressive tastes, however may find themselves caught up in Alsop’s old-fashioned razzle-dazzle. Her brush wiggles and skids, delivering light, air, and a sense of giddy vehemence. Plein-air painting may be a dinosaur, but it looks pretty lively here.