

VISUAL ARTS » REVIEW

Landscapes capture rush and tumble of time



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MONICA TAP AT WYINICK/
TUCK GALLERY

\$5,800-\$10,800. Until May 1,
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Monica Tap, whose exhibition of new paintings at Toronto's Wynick/Tuck Gallery is titled *Here and also elsewhere*, sent me a charming e-mail a few days ago, which helps to locate her opulently painted landscapes in what appears to be the mad rush of their passing us by – even as we stand still gazing upon them.

“The dictionary definition for ‘spring,’” writes Tap, “indicates that it is the season that falls ‘between winter and summer.’ Look up summer and the dictionary will direct you helpfully to the season ‘between spring and fall.’ Given that my paintings are based on roadside video captures, the exact spot I end up painting is impossible to locate. It’s a tiny fragment of a second somewhere between here and there.”

Four of seven paintings making up her exhibition have the word “between” in their titles (*Between fall and spring*, *Between winter and summer* and so on, wheeling right on around the seasons).

The “roadside video capture” of which she writes is a reference to the fact that Tap bases her paintings not on sketches or still photographs, but rather on the 30-second, low-resolution video clips she harvests



Monica Tap's *Between summer and winter*: Her works are based on low-resolution video clips taken with her digital camera while travelling.

from her digital camera while travelling in cars and on trains and buses.

She first began working this way five years ago. Back then I was writing about Tap and thinking about whether or not painting could adequately deal with time-based media. The Futurists and the Cubists tried it early in the last century, and came up with something else instead. Still photographers tried it and mostly decided time was better left to the movies. Even the Impression-

ists tried it – think of Monet's sequential attempts to track the movement of the light across the facade of Rouen Cathedral.

With Tap, you do get the rush and tumble of things, the feeling of time before and time after. In the painting titled *Between summer and winter*, for example, the vertical thrusting of the violet trees, the warp of the trees, you might say, is interwoven with the woof of their creamy orange foliage, as it sweeps horizontally by us.

The foliage is fast. The tree trunks are slower.

And there is another kind of in-between, here-and-there-ness informing these headlong paintings. “The title of the show, *Here and also elsewhere*,” writes Tap, “seemed simultaneously precise and open in a way I hope the paintings are. ... It made me think of the ‘here’ of the studio as I paint and the ‘elsewhere’ contained in the image I paint from.” It also hints, as she points out, at how a digital

image, with its endless imagistic information being simultaneously everywhere and nowhere, can also be “here and also elsewhere all at once.”

The stillest painting in the exhibition, it should be noted – a quiet reflecting pond in the woods – is called *Missing*, a sad and loving reference to the late Gerald Ferguson, who, during the late 1980s, was Tap's teacher at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, and remained a mentor for her until his death last Oct. 8.