

Mark Safan

American Artist & Musician, based in New York City

When I went to visit Mark in his studio in China Town, New York, back in 2009, every fibre in my body felt like grabbing one of his many, well-used paintbrushes, and just start painting. His paintings draw you into another stratosphere, one where everything is possible. Mark collects pieces of cardboard or other discarded material from the streets of New York City, and uses them in his abstract mixed-media paintings, as a way of re-establishing a hidden, or forgotten, world through his own vision. Light, depth and playfulness are all present in his work, as well as an all-embracing imaginary space that captures and seduces the viewer in both a gentle and powerful way. Once you have seen a Mark Safan painting up close, you never forget it.

Sophie Clausen

It is a paradox to have chosen to paint that which cannot be painted: the sky, which is empty space, only appears to be blue, and the constantly moving clouds and meteorological phenomena that inhabit it are merely vapor. It is all appearances. Sounds a little like painting itself - mere pigment that pretends to be something else. The lie, as Picasso mused, that allows us to see the truth. Beginning with the unpaintable betrays the fact that as seductive as the image or thing may be it must always be simply what it is - a painting - the work of a painter. The sky is universally symbolic of heaven - constant and eternal. So much of our psyche is wrapped up in the sky being above and beyond - representing wonder and that to which we aspire. All of this is redolent in a blue painting. It is at the same time so obvious, yet so subtle.

Mark Safan 2017



Mixed media on canvas, 2014