



DREAM SEQUENCE
Clockwise from top left: 'Stranger With the Hat', 'Manhattan Before the Dark Age', 'Rainstorm Approaching the Town by the Sea That Never Existed', 'Chiron Serenading the Autumn Woods', all by Skip Noah

Noah's Arc

A self-taught painter and former wannabe rock star, Skip Noah evokes alternate worlds with magical realism in a new solo show | *By Steve Carter* |

The nameless town is built by the sea, clinging to the sheer mountainside. Winding streets, archways, clustered buildings and a minaret define the scene, as splashing stars pepper the night sky. But while the village slumbers, a phalanx of storm clouds rumbles into view. Welcome, traveler, to Skip Noah's *Rainstorm Approaching the Town by the Sea That Never Existed*, one of the paintings in his current exhibition at Dahlia Woods Gallery. Influenced by dreams, Indian art and Russian literature, Japanese artist Katsushika Hokusai and authors Salman Rushdie and Gabriel García Márquez, Noah's works draw viewers into worlds that blur the boundaries between the possible and the fantastical. "I try to have a surreal quality to my work," the artist acknowledges, "it's a free zone for interpretation. I like artwork that tells a story, even if a painting is people-less. The fun in looking at art is coming up with your own story about it."

Although Noah (real name Daniel Myers; he chose the pen name in 2000) lived in Dallas for 20 of his 39 years, he moved around extensively as a child; for the past year, he, his wife, Nikki,

and two young daughters have lived in Austin. While he showed an early interest in art, and aspired to be a Deep Ellum-based rock star back in the day, (he's a recovering drummer), Noah degreed at UT-Dallas and is largely self-taught as a painter. Poring over art books, Noah's passion was ignited by Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger*, Dalí, Miró and Klimt; he was soon studying in the galleries of the DMA, Kimbell and other museums. "All those great masters were my teachers, those were the people I really tried to emulate," he recalls. He's been showing regularly since the mid-'90s, and *Other Worlds, the Dream Paintings of Skip Noah* is his second solo exhibition at Dahlia Woods, on view through March 19.

Of the 12-plus works in the current show, the lion's share are new pieces. Painting in acrylic on canvas, Noah also involves pastel, pencils and pens. The often highly textural surface of his paintings is an *idée fixe* in his vision. "The first layer of paint is never what it's going to end up being," he explains about his canvases. "A person may start out green or blue, then I'll paint another color on top, add some pen or pencil, because I'm trying to show the depth inside. I put everything I have into a piece, and as much detail as I can; I call it 'maximalism.' I'm trying to make my work a window into my thoughts—a little window to an alternate reality." ■

600 Cantegral St., dabliawoodsgallery.com, skipnoah.com