



Shana Nys Dambrot, "Marisa Takal: Beyond Oy Too Scared to Ha Ha," December 2017.

**WHITEHOT  
MAGAZINE™**



*Marisa Takal, How to Enter on an Empty Stomach Empty Plomach Empty Rumoch  
Rupert Murdoch Murder Docking Pay to Play to Pay For*

Marisa Takal: *Beyond Oy Too Scared to Ha-Ha*,

Night Gallery, Los Angeles

December 2, 2017 - January 13, 2018

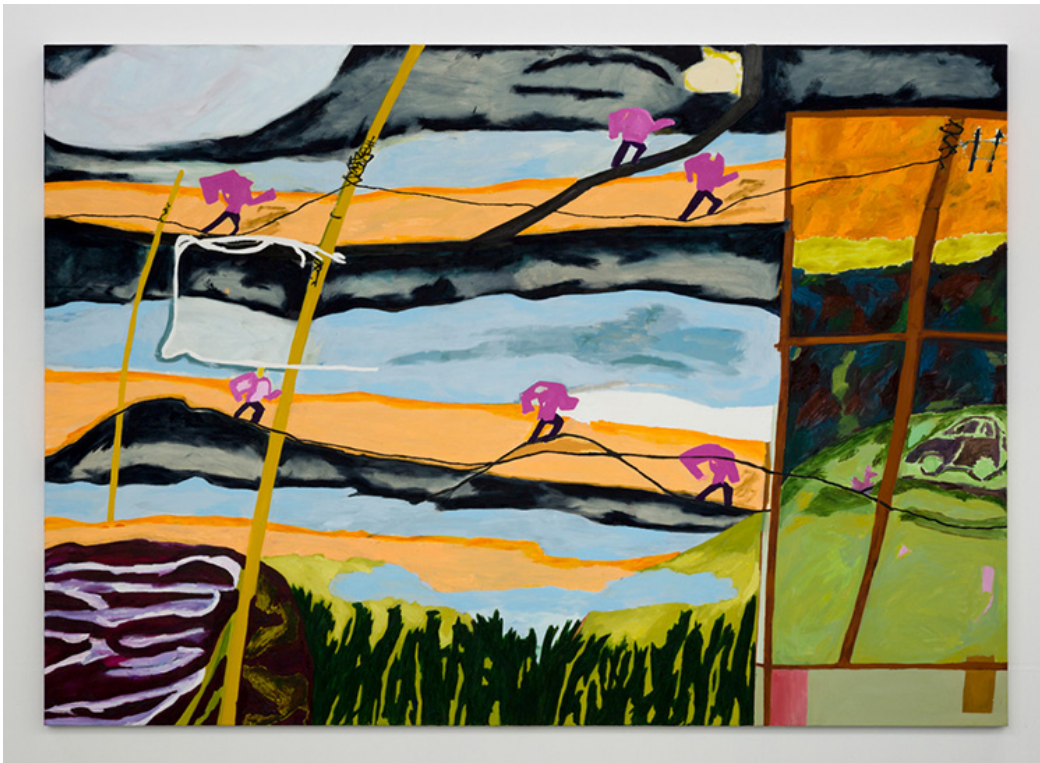
## **Marisa Takal: Beyond Oy Too Scared to Ha-Ha**

By SHANA NYS DAMBROT, DEC. 2017

Marisa Takal's current exhibition at **Night Gallery** in Los Angeles has a title that suggests comedy and politics. But all that "too scared to laugh" energy has been sublimated into delightful, awkwardly pastoral, eccentrically



flat urban and rural landscapes -- a refreshing alternative to the emotionally intense didactic that often comes with political art. Instead, Takal's inventive quasi-natural color schemes, pointedly naive rendering, and passages of edgier post-modern detail combine to evoke a general state of emotional constraint, wary humor, and paradoxical pictorial space. It is the very embodiment of the current zeitgeist of unease. And it's also an influential moment of discourse on the state of landscape painting, which as a general matter is enjoying an allegorical rather than a literal moment. Landscape is one of the easiest genres to bend into metaphorical motifs, and these fraught times have prompted what these paintings deliver.



*Marisa Takal, Only Friend a Place for Safety Safe Friend Only Always I'm Looking out of the Car Window There  
She Goes Flying fun\_ She's from the 80s but Born around 96 Dont Know her Name but it doesn't really matter*

Takal achieves a sincere sort of irony in both her narrative and her aesthetic; very pretty and a bit under the weather. Her palette seems almost psychological; derived from naturalism but inflected with mood. There's a sensibility approaching classic New England folk art in Takal's style, albeit run through the double filter of surrealism and a low-key anxiety attack. Her scenes of patchwork fields, spindly fences, occasional animals,



trees, what could be a river, and her symphony of tertiary greens combines for this effect, as well as the sophisticated but unselfconsciously schematic renderings. A few more urban or at least “in town” scenes are still tethered to the picturesque, as well as to a grid of roads and architecture. Her picture planes are compressed both vertically and horizontally, stacked rather than receding, and divided by networks of boundaries, fences, ley lines, and other kinds of borders. It begs the question, between what and what? City and country? Agriculture and industry? Purity and corruption? Love and fear? Us and them? Life and death? Me and you...?



*Marisa Takal, Something I-N-G Crossing the Street up the Hill On Repeat, oil on canvas, 55x50 inches, 2017*





*Marisa Takal, I've seen Madonna's House*



*Marisa Takal at Night Gallery, installation view*



These border fences divide the image's universe, but from the viewer's point of view, even as they parse up the space, they literally stitch the composition together, like big games of Chutes & Ladders, or surgery scars. There are relatively few figures in the pictures, and those that appear are rendered in swift, raw strokes that suggest rather than depict. They straddle economies of scale and spatial organization, bridging incompatibilities, like a Fauvist Escher. Viewed as a collection, their internal spatial logic rather takes over; the vertigo subsides, her world becomes familiar. By the time you leave the gallery, it's the real world that has stopped making sense. **WM**