



CHARITY BAKER  
*Midnight Sun*

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FEBRUARY 21 – MARCH 31, 2023

NANCY MARGOLIS GALLERY







# Midnight Sun

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*Midnight Sun* by Charity Baker is a selection of *plein-air* and studio paintings inspired by the effects of continuous sunlight on an individual's psyche. The global pandemic awakened a yearning in Baker to reconnect with nature, discovering that the sun uplifted her through profound moments of isolation. Interested in the power of light, she questioned what would happen if the sun didn't fully set. Baker settled in Böllnas, Sweden, in the summer of 2022 to experience this phenomenon firsthand. She found that, "As exciting as constant light can be, it affects quietly functioning parts of the body like our biological clock, cognition, memory, arousal, sleep and energy balance." In the resultant works, Baker explores how the midnight sun illuminates what darkness usually obscures.

Working from direct observation, Baker produced numerous small-scale oil paintings that capture the ever-present sun. Primarily landscapes, these works — the smallest only 6x6 inches — use bold, gestural brushstrokes to simulate the energy of revolving light. Time of day is uncertain, disorienting our preconceived notions of the stillness that comes with evening. Dense forests, sensational

clouds, and bathers are portrayed under what could be early morning or late evening skies. Seen as a whole, the *plein-air* studies convey both an ambiguity and an outward exuberance of a world alit.

By contrast, Baker's large-scale studio paintings reveal the effects of constant sunlight on a person's inward experience. These works were created in her studio, removed from the original source of inspiration. As such, more weight is placed on the human condition than on a representation of nature. The sun's presence sheds light on actions and desires that are typically felt in private. Pairs of figures share moments charged with quiet intensity and tenderness. In an arresting self-portrait, the artist's gaze pierces the canvas and locks eyes with the viewer. A full 74 inches wide, the scale of her largest painting invites the onlooker to step into a life-size forest to experience a personal moment of reflection. While nighttime typically provides a veil of privacy to explore longings, mischief, and uncertainty, the light of the midnight sun exposes these desires and vulnerabilities for all to see.



**DAYLIGHT**

2022

Oil on canvas

56 x 56 inches







**TREES (NIGHT)**

2022

Oil on masonite panel

9 x 12 inches

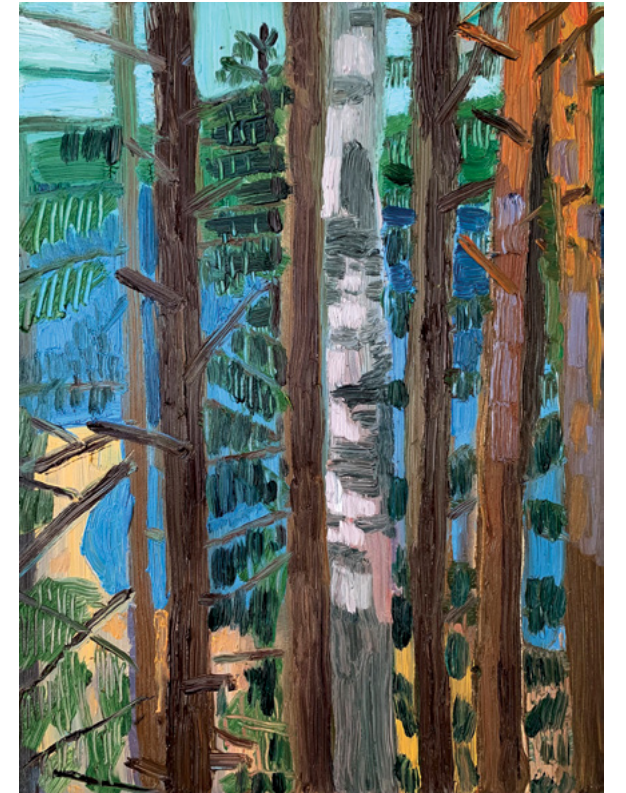


**TREES (MORNING)**

2022

Oil on masonite panel

12 x 9 inches



**TREES (DAY)**

2022

Oil on masonite panel

12 x 9 inches





**BATHERS (MORNING)**

2022

Oil on masonite panel

8 x 10 inches



**BATHERS (NIGHT)**

2022

Oil on masonite panel

8 x 10 inches



**ORBADEN SUNSET**

2022

Oil on canvas

50 x 57 inches



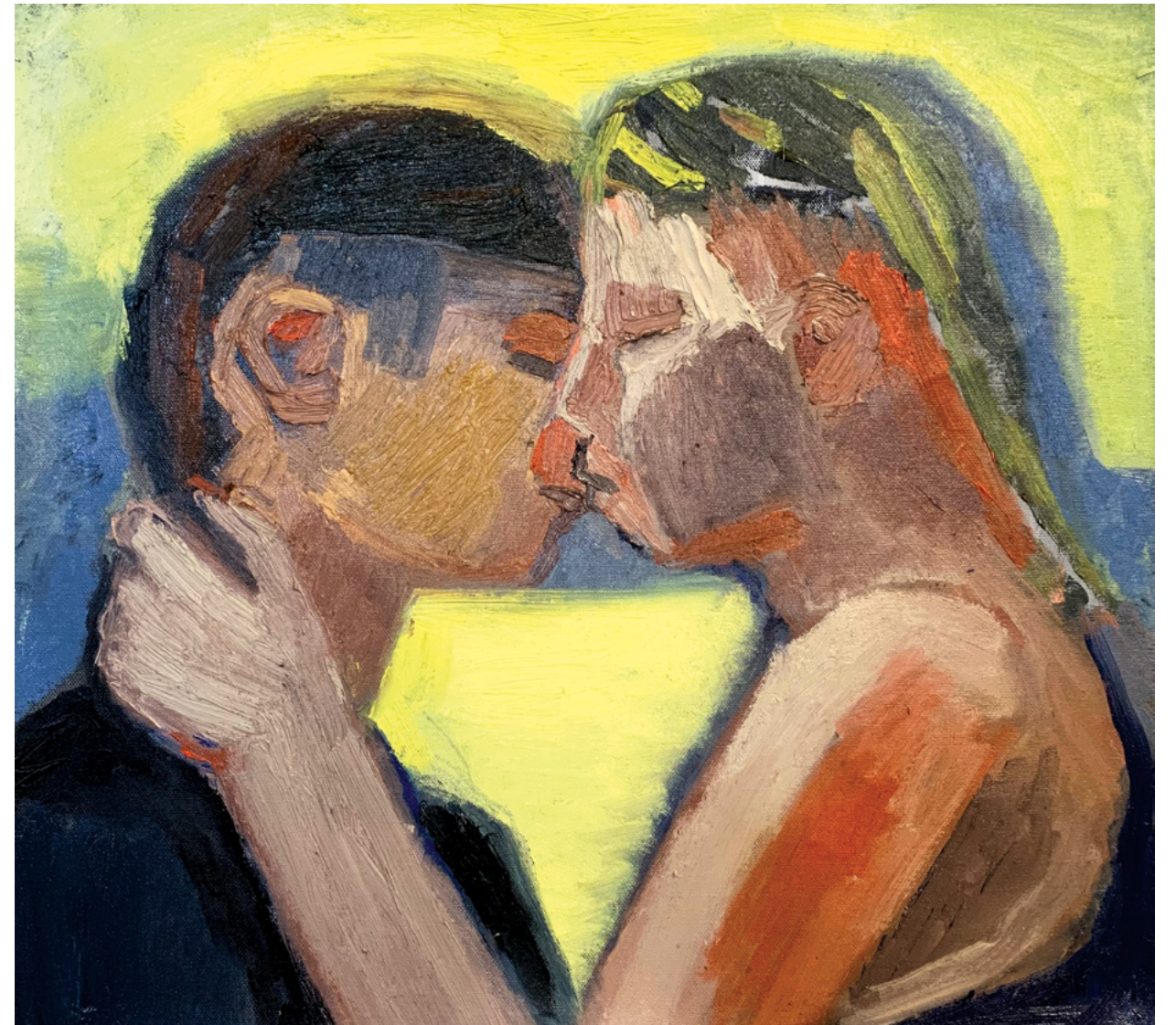


**ARCHIPELAGO II**

2022

Oil on canvas

18 x 19 inches





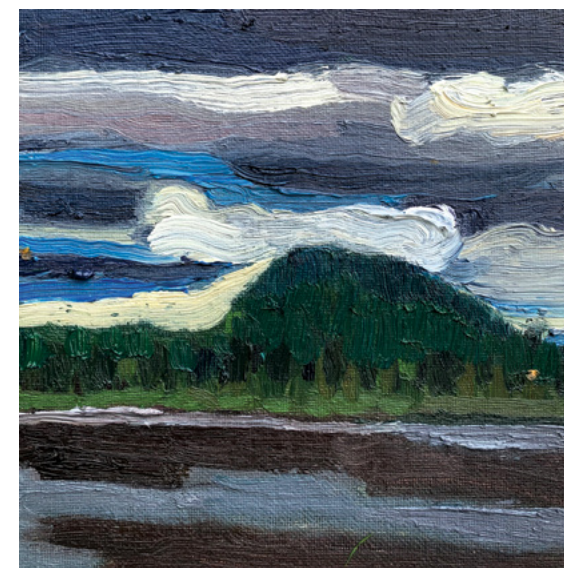


**VALLEY (NIGHT)**

2022

Oil on masonite panel

8 x 10 inches



**VALLEY (DAY)**

2022

Oil on masonite panel

6 x 6 inches



**MIDNIGHT SUN**

2023

Oil on canvas

31 x 31 inches





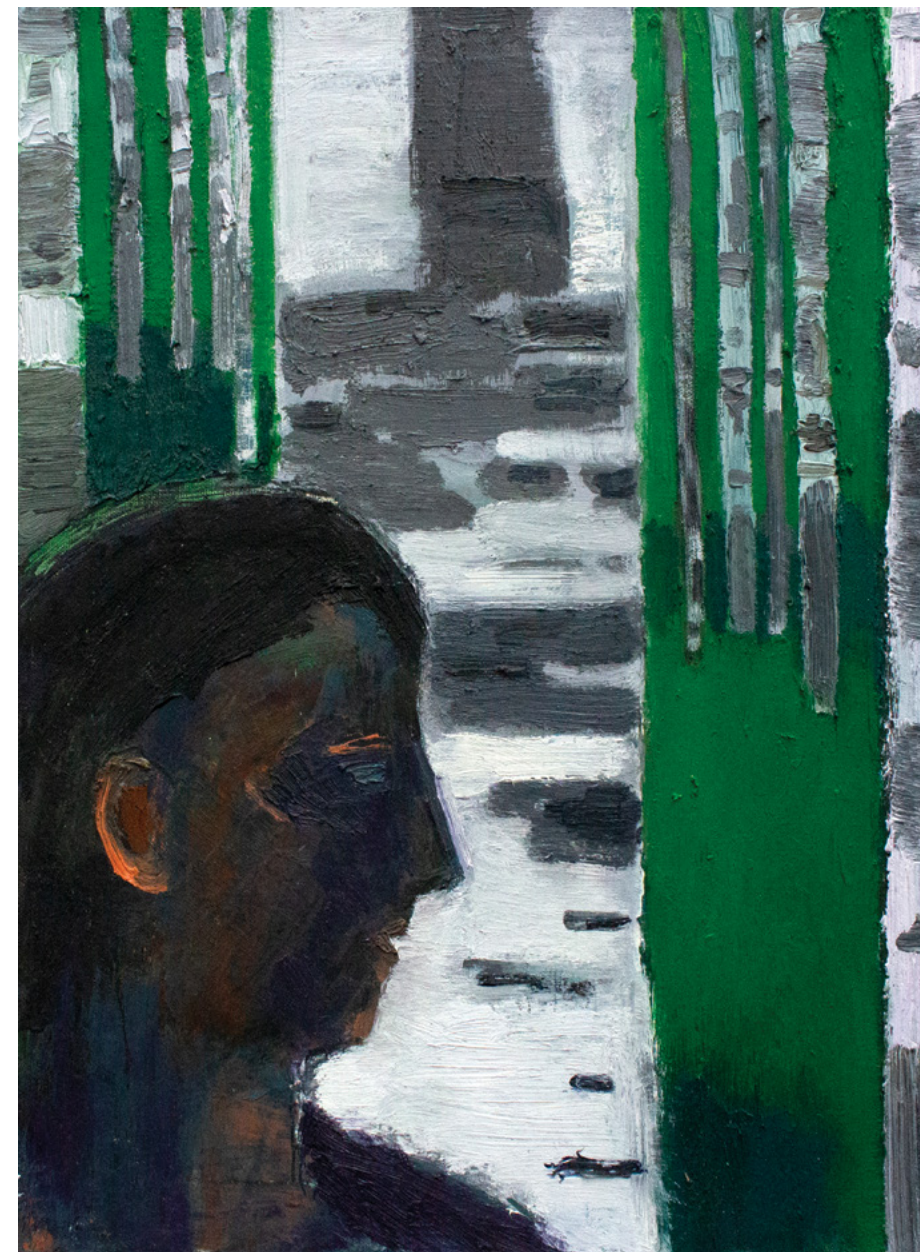


**ARCHIPELAGO III**

2023

Oil on masonite panel

10 x 8 inches



**BIRCH**

2022

Oil on canvas

20 x 16 inches



IN THE FOREST WITH STARS

2022

Oil on canvas

36 x 24 inches





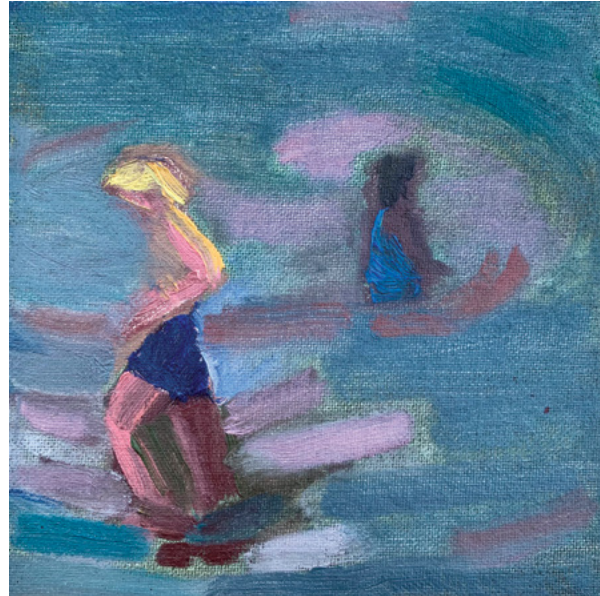


**LAKE SWIMMERS I**

2022

Oil on board

6 x 6 inches

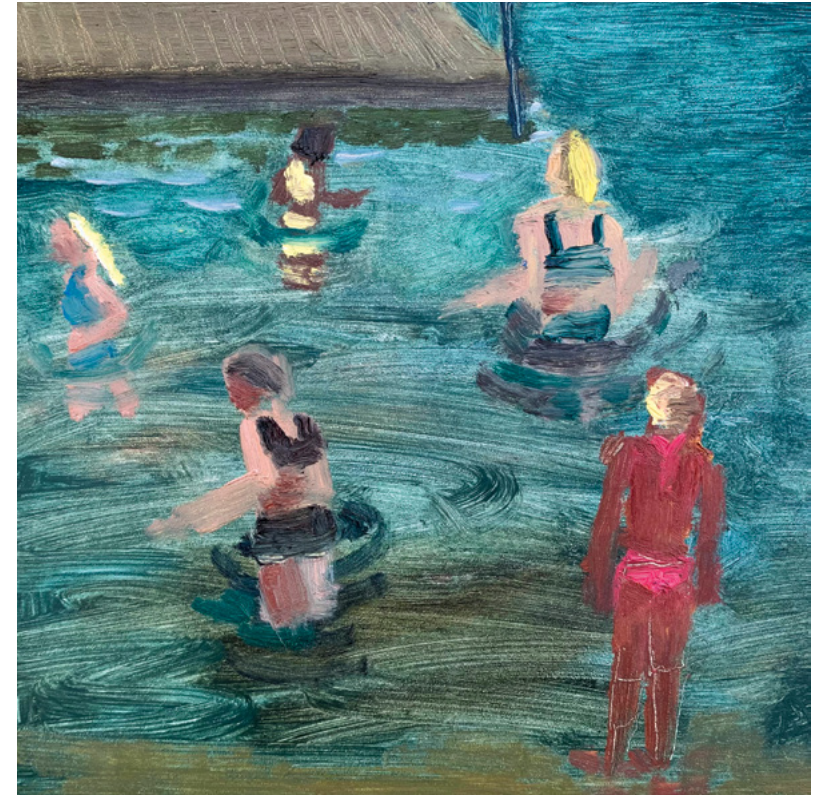


**LAKE SWIMMERS III**

2022

Oil on board

6 x 6 inches



**LAKE SWIMMERS II**

2022

Oil on masonite panel

8 x 8 inches



SUMMER FOREST AT NIGHT

2022

Oil on canvas

67 x 74 inches







This project started when I was talking to a Swedish friend of mine about the light in Sweden. She described a certain anxiety that the midnight sun caused the Swedes in the summer. As exciting as constant light can be, it affects quietly functioning parts of the body like our biological clock, cognition, blood pressure, memory, arousal, reproduction, sleep and energy balance.

This reminded me of the pleasure and pain from the past couple years, when the world paused the way that it did. While we stepped back, Nature dominated even a city like New York and I was reminded about my inherent connection to it, and most specifically to the sky. During the summer I would paint the sunsets every night, realizing how unique and powerful light is. This sun got me through incredible moments of isolation.

But what happens when the sun doesn't go down? I wanted to experience this World of the Midnight Sun and paint it up close.

— CHARITY BAKER



## EDUCATION

- 2019 M.F.A. New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting, and Sculpture, New York, NY  
1995 Bachelor of Architecture, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2023 *Midnight Sun*, Nancy Margolis Gallery, online  
2020 Catherine Fosnot Gallery, New London, CT  
*After Sunset*, Force Gallery Projects, NY  
*The Red Passion Suite*, (Hohenberg Travel Grant) New York Studio School, NY

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2022 *Horizons: Charity Baker + Brian Rego*, Nancy Margolis Gallery, online  
*Sign of Frankenstein*, Amos Eno Gallery, Brooklyn, NY  
*Tide Pools*, Ground Floor Contemporary, Birmingham, AL  
2021 *Art For Your Collection*, selected by Karen Wilkin, New London, CT  
*Invisible Selves*, Millersville University, PA  
*Breaking Through: 10 Contemporary Female Artist to Celebrate*, Catherine Fosnot Gallery, ARTSY  
*Playtime*, Space Scribbles  
2020 *Art For Your Collection*, selected by Karen Wilkin, New London, CT  
*Mercedes Matter Awards Show*, Margalit Startup City, NY  
*Pairs*, ArtInRes, curated by Mel Reese  
*Wham*, The Bernie Wohl Center, NY  
*Alumni Exhibition*, winner of Mercedes Matter/Ambassador Middendorf Prize,  
New York Studio School, NY  
2019 *AXA Art Prize Exhibition*, San Francisco Art Institute, CA; Richard Gray Gallery, Chicago;  
New York Academy of Art, NY  
*Alumni Exhibition*, winner of Mercedes Matter/Ambassador Middendorf Prize,  
New York Studio School, NY  
*M.F.A. Show*, New York Studio School, NY

- 2018 *Art at King's Oak*, Newton, PA  
*Right Behind the New Museum*, New York, NY  
*Fowler-Kellogg Art Center*, Chautauqua Institute, Chautauqua, NY  
2017 *New Feminism*, She Gallery, NY  
*Self Indulgence*, Hampden Gallery, UMass Amherst, MA  
*Freedom of Expression*, VSB, Brooklyn, NY  
2016 *Playing Games*, Gallerie Chiz, Pittsburgh, PA  
*The Infinite Mind*, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY

## AWARDS

- 2023 Caernarfon Residency, Life Full Color, Caernarfon Wales  
2020 Wing Art Award, first runner up, Wing Art Gallery, UK  
Mercedes Matter/Ambassador Middendorf Prize, chosen by Berry Campbell Gallery  
2019 Mercedes Matter/ Ambassador Middendorf prize  
Hohenberg Travel Grant, awarded by New York Studio School  
2018 Chautauqua Summer Residency, awarded by New York Studio School  
2017-19 Jane Chace Scholarship award by New York Studio School

## REVIEWS

- 2020 *Charity Baker and the NYSS vocabulary of art*, Seattle Artist League  
*NYC Photographers On Painters*, interview by Angela Cappetta  
*Charity Baker-Insights Into Process*, Instagram TV video  
*Interview*, She Curates Gallery  
2019 *Student Perspectives*, New York Studio School  
2018 *Students studying fine and performing arts receive \$739,000 in scholarships*, Chautauqua Daily,  
by Matthew Steinberg  
*Painter Baker Returns to Art after Architecture Career*, Chautauqua Daily, by Kirby Davis  
2015 *Attention Rising Star*, Pittsburgh Tribune, by Kurt Shaw











