



Mixed Metaphor (Windfall), oil, 22 x 28.

Robert McCauley

"Today, the border between hinterland and wilderness is mostly romanticized history, or political fodder in minor regional skirmishes. This piece establishes a "here vs. there," an "us vs. them," with the borderline defined by a windfall barricade of the last tree remaining. The bears, with their humanoid, erect stance, are a metaphor for confrontation. Their gazes, neither aggressive nor passive, make direct contact with our eyes. We are seeing ourselves, threatened by the same issues of habitat loss and deteriorating ecosystems.

"My work is influenced by 19th-century art and literature, which use the American landscape as stage backdrop for the ongoing drama of westward expansion. I think of Thomas Cole standing in the wild underbrush, painting the cleared and fenced land in the oxbow far below. Or Natty Bumppo (James Fennimore Cooper's "Deerslayer") peering from the shadows of the virgin forest to witness a drift of smoke several miles away, signaling the onslaught of civilization."



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