

*"Holly Coulis, Works from Nikko,"* Klaus von Nichtssagend Gallery, January 19, 2024.



Holly Coulis in Japan

Holly Coulis's unique exploration of color, transparency, and line are on full display in her gouache paintings on paper. These works complement her oil paintings in their use of layering color and tones to flatten and deepen space, create reflections and transparency, and move the eye across dancing lines. The unique properties of paper and the quick-drying opacity of gouache allow Coulis to experiment in different ways, while the portability of materials give her flexibility in when and where she can work.

This edition of KLAUSGALLERY.CLOUD takes a look at a particularly unique set of gouache paintings on paper that were made during Coulis's time on residency at Troedsson Villa in Nikko, Japan. This secluded environment immersed the artist in natural surroundings for a period of six weeks. She went on to travel throughout the country, including to Kyoto, where visits to several rock gardens made a lasting impression. This was Coulis's first trip to Japan, and the experience left her with both an expansive view of her surroundings and a peaceful distance from which to approach her work.



Small gouache sketches on a table in Coulis's studio at Troedsson Villa (photo: Holly Coulis)

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Holly Coulis *Untitled*, 2023, Gouache on Arches paper, 10 1/4 x 14 1/4 in



Rock garden in Kyoto, Japan

Troedsson Villa was started as an artist residency in 2015 by artist Anne Eastman.

"This was an incredibly peaceful spot, airy and private – a wonderful place to paint."

Troedsson Villa, as a residency, includes a small studio slightly uphill from the house. It has four sliding wooden windows, one on each of the four walls. The eastern view is of the side of the mountain and, with the window open, the ambient sound of the river is continuous and surprisingly loud.

The house itself is surrounded by tall, old trees, and mossy grounds including a koi pond. All of this is protected by a stone wall of the kind seen all over Nikko. It is private and over time, you sink into it, always aware of the mountains, rivers, trees, rocks and moss who are your neighbors.

"While being constantly inspired by the beauty and space in Japanese art and architecture, the rock gardens of Kyoto left the greatest impression. They are otherworldly, deeply creative and beautiful. It seems natural to expect to be wowed by them, but even so, they were a little shocking."



Looking out the window of Troedsson Villa (photo: Holly Coulis)