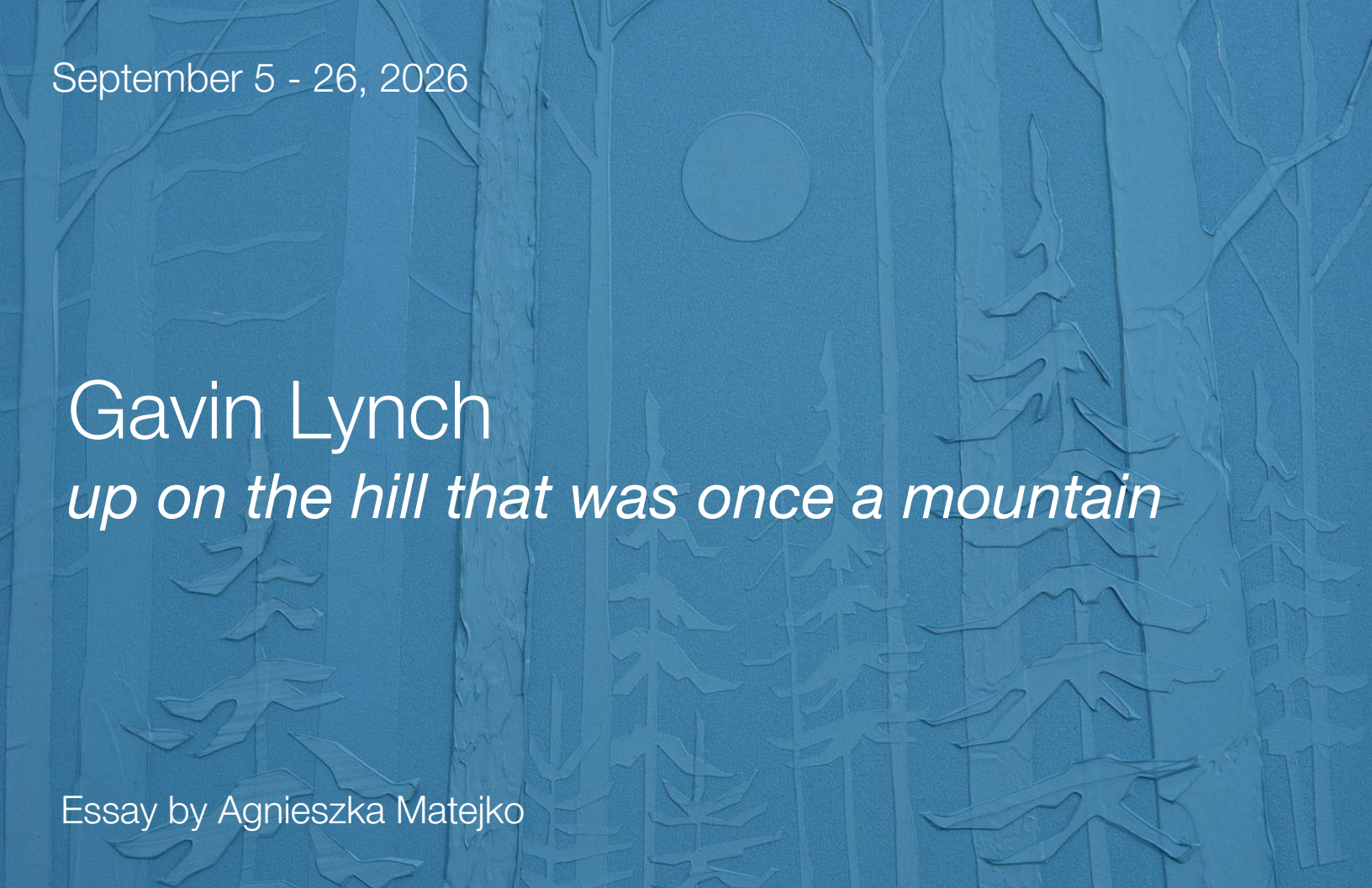




September 5 - 26, 2026

Gavin Lynch
up on the hill that was once a mountain

Essay by Agnieszka Matejko



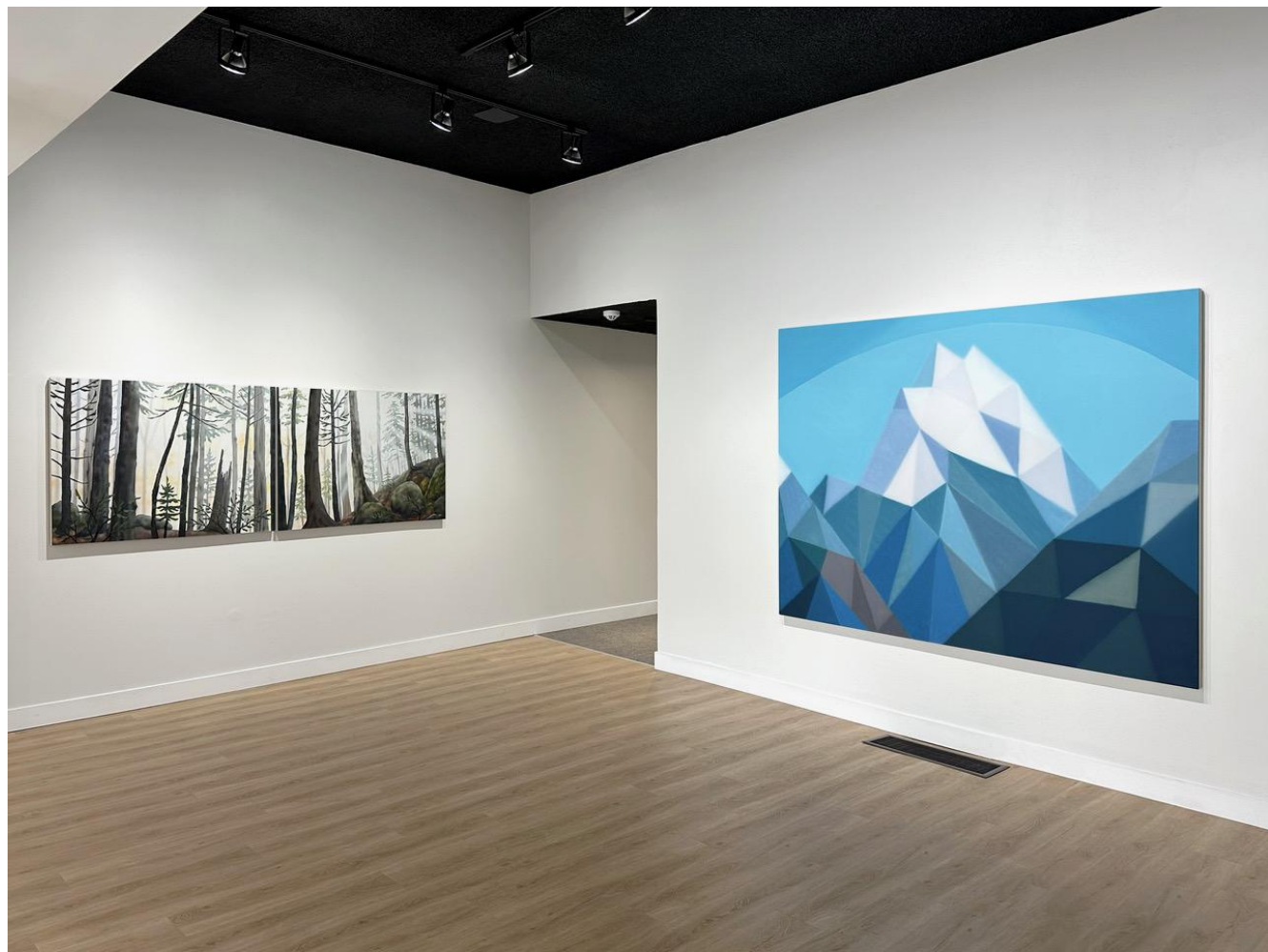
Up on the hill that was once a mountain I & II, 2026. Acrylic on Canvas, 35" x 95 ½" (diptych)

A Billion Years in the Backyard: Where Deep Time Meets the Digital Age

By Agnieszka Matejko

Have you ever gazed at your backyard and imagined what it looked like decades, centuries—or even eons—ago? Gavin Lynch, an artist who is part of a new wave of Canadian landscape painters, has. Raised in a northern B.C. logging town, he now lives in the boreal forest of Quebec's Gatineau Hills. There, he has spent countless hours painting the land around his home while looking beyond what the eyes can see to imagine the invisible: the immense mountains that once pierced the sky where his home now stands.

His house, tucked around the back of a ski hill, is surrounded by hundreds of kilometres of walking trails that wind through shady forests, past beaver ponds and Precambrian rock outcrops, toward long horizons of rolling hills. On his walks, Lynch often passes the very spot he depicts in *Up On The Hill That Was Once a Mountain*, the painting that gives the exhibition its name. The trail cuts through the centre of the composition and leads to his house, just 200 metres downhill. Soft rays of early-winter light filter through the forest, throwing the tree trunks into stark silhouette. The scene is, quite literally, Lynch's backyard.



Such haunting panoramas provide fertile ground for Lynch's art, but the area's nearly mythical history sent his imagination soaring: the very hill he climbs almost daily was once part of one of the largest mountain ranges on Earth. More than a billion years ago, long before plants or animals inhabited the planet, two continental plates collided, thrusting up a vast mountain range that may have rivalled the Himalayas in scale. Then, grain by grain, over unimaginable stretches of time, wind, water and, eventually, massive ice sheets wore it down, leaving behind the serenely rolling folds of the Gatineau Hills.

Lynch imagined the ghostly, jagged peaks as abstractions. In *The Ancient Massif*, for example, the mountains appear sharp and geometric from a distance. But walk closer and their edges dissolve into a haze. Lynch creates this visual trick through a laborious process of applying layer upon layer of airbrushed paint. The time it takes is worth the effort. After all, the ancient mountain range can never be seen; it exists only in our minds.



The Ancient Massif, 2026. Acrylic on Canvas, 66" x 84"

This sense of discovery, surprise and pure playfulness runs throughout the show. Lynch delights in upturning expectations. In *Another Age*, for instance, the ancient mountain range is rendered with photographic realism. From a distance, it could be mistaken for a traditional landscape painting. But move closer and, as if by magic, the crisp edges begin to dissolve into pixels.

In fact, pixelation often appears in his work, introducing a contemporary twist to historic landscape traditions. It reminds us that we live in an era mediated by digital culture, where a landscape can become a fleeting snapshot on Instagram. “I live in the woods, but I also live online,” Lynch explains.





These vastly different experiences of time are at the heart of the show: the unfathomable stretches of geological time that have shaped the Earth are set against fleeting digital moments. His ancient mountains speak of eons passing almost imperceptibly, as wind, water and ice wear them down grain by grain. The pixelation evokes the cursory snapshot—a landscape captured on a phone, posted to Instagram and viewed for only a few seconds before we scroll on.

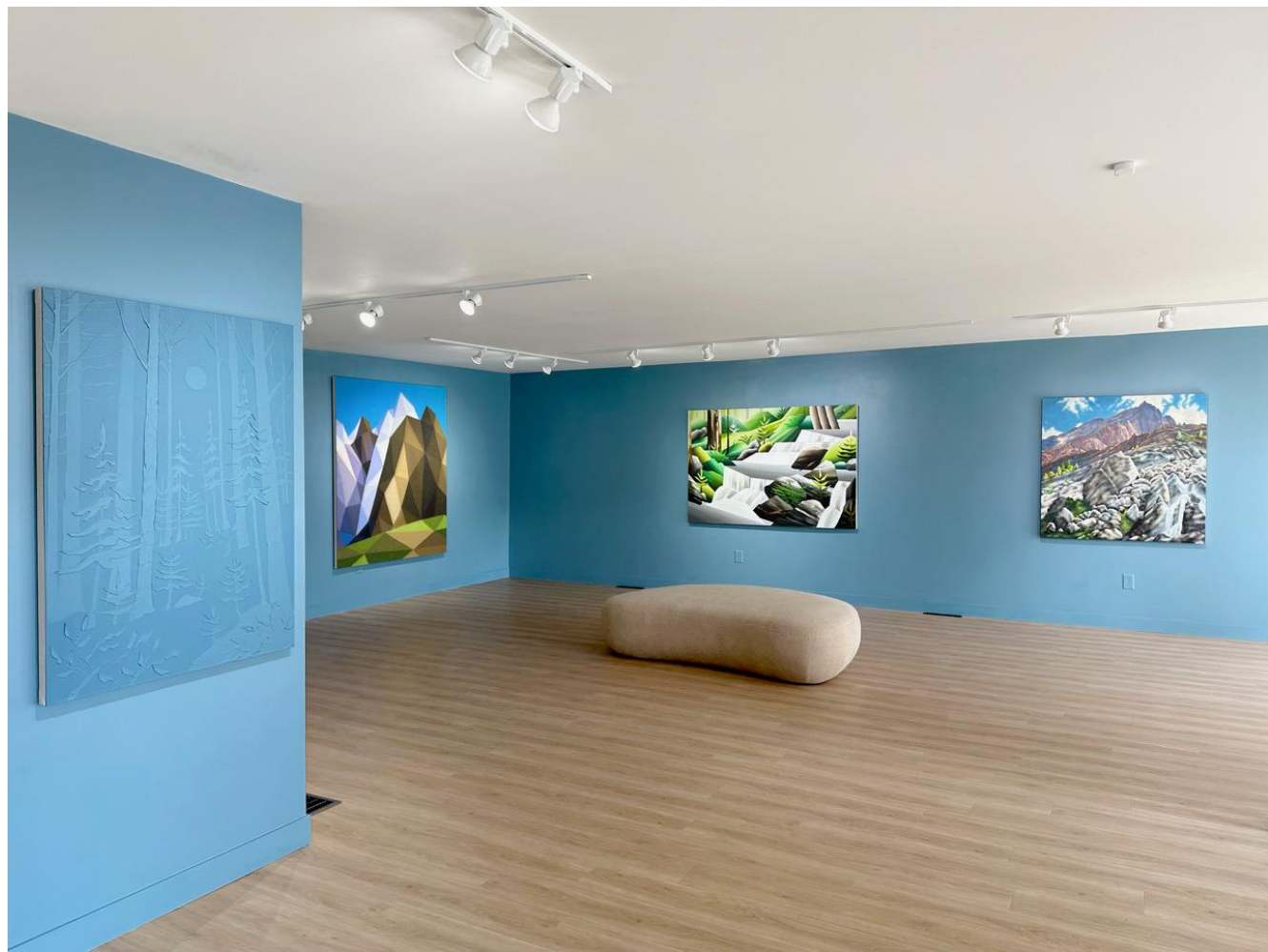
Lynch's paintings ask us to resist that speed. They become a kind of time travel, moving us from the instantaneous to the immense. "It's really easy to forget that we are alive on this organic spaceship hurtling through space," Lynch says. His art brings us back to truly seeing the world around us while reminding us that, like it or not, we are all passengers on this journey through time.

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The Breaking Day, 2026. Acrylic on Canvas, 54" x 35"





Comic Sans, 2025. Acrylic on Canvas, 24" x 18"



Sunset Loading..., 2025. Acrylic on Canvas, 24" x 18"



Hauntology, 2025. Acrylic on Canvas, 24" x 18"





Nature as Theatre, 2026. Acrylic on Canvas, 23 ½" x 35 ½"

Publication in conjunction with the Gavin Lynch: *up on the hill that was once a mountain exhibition* by Peter Robertson Gallery

September 5 - 26, 2026.

Essay written by Agnieszka Matejko.

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Front cover:
Gavin Lynch
Blue Woods, 2026.
Acrylic on Canvas,
47 ¾" x 35"

Quebec-based artist Gavin Lynch has quickly become a key player in the new vision of landscape painting that is invigorating this archetypal Canadian genre. Employing a collage approach to the picture plane, Lynch resists pictorial and painterly continuity in favor of unexpected and often conflicting combinations of elements, some derived from memory, others from the artist's imagination. Wavering between material flatness and pictorial depth, luminosity and darkness, and abstraction and representation, these paintings exude an energizing tension that invites extended looking.

**peter
robertson
gallery**



Gavin Lynch