

Scott Kahn

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Success came late to Scott Kahn (born 1946 in Springfield, Massachusetts), whose painting style has changed little since taking shape in the 1980s.

Although that decade saw all sorts of painting styles come to the fore (Bad Painting, Neo-Expressionism, Free Figuration, Transavantgarde, etc.), the genre of Magic Realism, which he's been exploring ever since, probably disqualified him from the avant-garde circuits. His paintings combine reality, fiction and pure fantasy, with the oneiric taking precedence over the real. He regards them as a kind of "visual diary" of the world around him. For all his early contact with Mark Rothko and the Abstract Expressionists, his hieratic, almost naïve figures and dreamlike, meticulous, maniacally detailed landscapes are no less reminiscent of the Douanier Rousseau, David Hockney, and Magritte. Falling within the American portraiture and landscape painting traditions, Kahn's oeuvre draws on the Regionalism of the inter-war period and takes particular inspiration from the work of Grant Wood (1891-1942). His landscapes are realised "from memory" and accommodate all sorts of oneiric oddities.

— Éric Troncy