

HAUSER & WIRTH

NICOLAS PARTY

RED FOREST, 2022



Nicolas Party (b. 1980)
Red Forest
2022

Soft pastel on linen
220 x 160 x 3.8 cm / 86 5/8 x 63 x 1 1/2 inches
PARTY117112



Detail.

NICOLAS PARTY (B. 1980)

Red Forest

2022

Soft pastel on linen

220 x 160 x 3.8 cm / 86 5/8 x 63 x 1 1/2 inches

227.3 x 166.3 x 11 cm / 89 1/2 x 65 1/2 x 4 3/8 inches (framed)

Verso, signed and dated: 'Nicolas Party 2022'

PARTY117112

PROVENANCE

Hauser & Wirth

NICOLAS PARTY

RED FOREST, 2022

'I like imagining a forest made of all the trees ever painted.' - Nicolas Party [1]

Nicolas Party is renowned for his boldly coloured portraits, still-lives, and, most recently, his remarkable landscapes. Born in Lausanne in 1980, Party attributes his captivation with nature to a childhood spent amid Switzerland's picturesque natural scenery. Through his deft handling of soft pastel, Party challenges and celebrates traditional conventions of representational image-making. His unique visual language, paired with the vibrant fluidity of his material, transforms the landscape tradition into an alluring and enveloping experience.

'I'm really attracted to subjects that appear in [art] history as constant markers, essential ingredients that always need to be used,' Party writes. 'Trees are one of those markers—sometimes as the main component of an image or sometimes in the background, but always there, looking at us, looking after us.' [2] In 'Red Forest' (2022), Party depicts an undulating landscape at twilight populated by glowing pine trees that light up the evening sky. Bright reds, fiery oranges, and radiant golden yellows awaken the trees' tall, dark trunks, while pinkish mauves and shadowy purples blend into browns where the branches have not yet been touched by the shimmering blaze. Influenced by his conversations with Bénédicte Ramade, an art historian, art critic, journalist and curator who made a connection between the idea of 'L'heure mauve' (mauve twilight) and the purple and red skies we are witnessing with forest fires, Party invites the viewer to reflect on nature and our relationship with the environment.

The entrancing composition has a soft, smooth quality—a hallmark of Party's work enabled by his ingenious use of soft pastel. Describing his choice of medium, Party states: 'Soft pastel is very different, it's very gentle. It's just dust.' [3] In 'Red Forest,' the chalky material imbues the work with a hazy atmosphere so subtle that the landscape appears caught in an almost dream-like state. The work's contrasting shades of gleaming yellows and hushed plum tones seem to collapse into one another, seizing the viewer's gaze. Party's light, agile touch and vivid pigments hark back to his early exploration of graffiti art as a teenager. Although no longer part of the artist's practice, graffiti's optical and compositional strategies remain foundational to the artist's method.

Writing about his use of trees as a recurring motif, Party explains, 'The infinite flexibility of the visual language of the tree makes its execution endlessly playful.' [4] This spirited aspect of Party's work, combined with his distinctive choice of medium, upheaves established notions of landscape painting to rework the canon. Through his profound appreciation for trees and the natural environment, Party creates mesmerising worlds out of colourful dust.

1.) Nicolas Party, 'Seeing the Forest for the Trees: Nicolas Party's Travels Through a Watercolor Thicket,' Ursula, Issue 6, Spring 2020.

2.) Ibid.

3.) Nicolas Party quoted in Glenn Fuhrman, Melissa Hyde, Dodie Kazanjian, 'Pastel: An Exhibition by Nicolas Party' (New York: The FLAG Art Foundation, 2020), 11.

4.) Nicolas Party, 'Seeing the Forest for the Trees: Nicolas Party's Travels Through a Watercolor Thicket.'