



# Bull Fighting, Lorca and Hamptons Landscapes Linked in Paintings by Dennis Snyder

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by Pat Rogers

One doesn't often associate bull fighting with bucolic landscapes found seaside in The Hamptons. For artist Dennis Snyder, the link isn't farfetched, especially when considered through his admiration for the romantic and surreal sides of the Spanish poet and dramatist Federico García Lorca (1898-1936). Synthesizing both through the idea of *querencia*—a metaphysical concept which translates to mean a place where one feels safe and where strength of character can be drawn—the connection is a telling one for Snyder.

Explaining that *querencia* also has a meaning in bull fighting—it is the place a bull instinctually finds in the ring to pause, re-center and adopt a defensive stance—the notion also seemed the perfect title for a [solo exhibition on view](#) at [Art Space 98](#) in East Hampton, N.Y. The show presents paintings of local landscapes with narrative figuration inspired by Lorca, the Spanish painter Diego Velázquez and the culture of Spain.



A painting from the "Lorca" series by Dennis Snyder. Courtesy Art Space 98.

"*Querencia* is a safe place, a place to feel at home," said Snyder in a phone interview. "The bull retreats to one spot he finds, a spot he feels safe in and secure. Ernest Hemmingway said that when the bull is in *querencia*, he is hard to defeat. I feel the East End's my *querencia*. I feel at home here."

The paintings in "*Querencia*" do not necessarily reflect Snyder's oeuvre but are a selection of those with a Spain or Hamptons connection with some pieces having both. For instance, *Querencia: The Red Scented Earth* mixes liberally inspiration from [Las Meninas](#), 1656, by [Diego Velazquez](#) (Spain, 1599-1660) with a portrait of Lorca, a bull and one of Snyder's dogs.

The girl in Snyder's painting is the main connection to *Las Meninas*. The Infanta Margarita Teresa (Margaret Theresa of Spain) was a princess who would grow to become a Holy Roman empress. She is set in Snyder's painting as a historical figure in a contemporary landscape with Lorca in the

foreground, a book lying open in wait, as if both the scene and the writing were equally worth contemplating.



“Querencia: The Red Scented Earth” by Dennis Snyder. Courtesy Art Space 98.

Other paintings in Snyder’s solo show include landscapes of the East End, figurative works with Lorca as inspiration, balled trees wrapped in twine as if prisoners, bathing suit clad women near water, narrative paintings featuring dogs and bulls popping up aplenty.



Painting by Dennis Snyder. Courtesy Art Space 98.

Snyder is known for art with undercurrents of social commentary that can feel surreal to some viewers. While his art radiates a sense of the unusual, the paintings are more of a reflection of Snyder’s sense of humor and the way he combines aspects of human nature and life in general. His compositions are also a reflection of the way his artist antenna taps into what’s moving in the airwaves with currents translated into art that reflects aspects of contemporary life.

“The most important thing, I always feel as a painter, is to pay attention,” he said. “It’s like I have an antenna that taps into what’s going on in the world and I get it down in canvas, or at least I try to. It’s a big thing that artists can do with their work. I like to be able to do it differently.”



“Watch Your Step” by Dennis Snyder. Oil on canvas, 24 x 30 inches. Courtesy of Art Space 98.

Snyder’s love of the East End is one wavelength that’s easy for him to connect to. “I have a love of the East End’s lands, sky, sea and farms,” he said. “It’s a big inspiration to record the beauty and the energy out here, the endlessness of the ocean, and express this in painting.”



Painting by Dennis Snyder. Courtesy Art Space 98.

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**BASIC FACTS:** "[Querencia: Oil Paintings by Dennis Snyder](#)" is on view from September 30 to October 31, 2016 at Art Space 98, located at 98 Newtown Lane, East Hampton, NY 11937. [www.artspace98.com](http://www.artspace98.com). Information on Dennis Snyder can be found at his website by clicking [here](#).

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