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Landscape and Memory

May 7, 2022 – June 25, 2022

Gallery hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Los Angeles, April 14, 2022 – Tufenkian Fine Arts is pleased to announce, *Landscape and Memory*, a group exhibition featuring a selection of artists whose artworks engage in a variety of approaches to the landscape genre. Among the highlights in this exhibition are new and recent works by Dawn Arrowsmith, Sam Grigorian, Alina Mnatsakanian, John David O’Brien, Paul Paiement, and Danny Shain. The exhibition will be on view from May 7th through June 25th, 2022, with an opening reception to be held on Saturday, May 7th from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm.

The title of this exhibition takes inspiration from the book, *Landscape and Memory*, Simon Schama’s kaleidoscopic investigation into the human relationship to the natural world and landscape representations in literature, art, and our collective consciousness. In his work, Schama explores the inseparability of human perception to our environment and how through this attachment we find a sense of identity in landscape. As the author notes, “It is our shaping perception that makes the difference between raw matter and landscape.”

The artists in this exhibition respond to the landscape genre through a spectrum of recollections: myths, memories, cultural histories, personal narratives, poetry, literature, and art. It is in this approach to the genre that these artists not only construct landscapes through the lens of ecological, topographical, or environmental considerations; but also as sociological and cultural compositions capable of eliciting memories and symbols specific of time and place.

Several of the artists in this exhibition confront their personal histories through an amalgam of abstract depictions of the landscape genre. In Dawn Arrowsmith’s lyrically rendered *Meeting Place* series, the artist relates emotion to time and space vis-à-vis her relationship with past artists such as Georgia O’Keeffe, Agnes Martin, and Frida Khalo. Similarly, the arabesques in Alina Mnatsakanian’s *Connecting dots* series reference the lives of past individuals whose movements and migrations, as well as those of their immediate families, affect their identities.

Other artists in the exhibition approach the landscape genre through the lens of the city environment, exploring the natural and social interstices that influence the fabric of urban existence. Danny Shain’s constellation of painted and patched streets, familiar structures of bridges and overpasses, clouds of erased graffiti, and the divine notion of intersection are the forms and forces that shape and influence the artist’s body of work, providing a direct

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interpretation of his urban environment. In mixed media paintings by Sam Grigorian, the artist makes reference to the bustling atmosphere of urban life through a subtle process of layering and abrasion which mirrors the natural stratification found in city centers.

Some works in the exhibition acknowledge and confront the paradoxical legacies of human behavior on the natural environment. John David O'Brien's *Storied Landscapes (Paesaggi Storici)* series treats erosion as a metaphor for the contradiction that arises out of the beauty found in the creation of something new in light of the natural forces of destruction and decay. In Paul Paiement's exquisitely rendered *Nexus* series, the artist exposes the tangled relationship between our collective view of nature with the idea of human culture and influence. In these works, Paiement harmonizes the synthetic elements of human society with the natural world by directly embedding plexiglass depictions of architectural drawings onto open vistas of verdant woodlands, arid desert highlands, and snowcapped mountain peaks.

The works in *Landscape and Memory* attest to the belief that landscape is not merely what we see in the world around us; rather, it is the ascription of values and philosophies to the places we retain in our memories.

"There is some deep personal distillation of spirit and concept which molds these earthly facts into some transcendental emotional and spiritual experience" - Ansel Adams

Dawn Arrowsmith was born in San Francisco and currently lives and works in Los Angeles, California. The artist received her B.F.A. from California State University Fullerton, and her M.F.A. at Claremont Graduate University. Arrowsmith's paintings are meditations on color. It has been said that each is a kind of minimalist luxury – pure, distilled, economical, but also rich, luscious, erotic.

Sam Grigorian, was born in Yerevan, Armenia, and now lives and works in Berlin, Germany. The artist is principally interested in the use of texture, structure, and muted coloration in his works. Grigorian achieves a relatively uniform (if still vital) "skin" by layering, treating, and scratching away outer layers.

Alina Mnatsakanian was born in Tehran, Iran, and now lives and maintains a studio in Neuchâtel, Switzerland. Mnatsakanian received her B.F.A from the Université de Paris 8, and her M.F.A from the California State University, Los Angeles. Issues of identity, borders, and social injustice inform the artist's work, approaching her practice through a broad range of mediums: painting, video art, photography, installation, and robotics.

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John David O'Brien was born in Sagamihara, Japan, and currently lives and works in Los Angeles, California, and Umbria, Italy. O'Brien received his B.F.A from the Istituto Statale D'Arte di Urbino, and his M.F.A from University of Southern California. The artist's practice is grounded in historical abstraction and is derived from a hermeneutic impulse, both in interpretation and translation. He draws from the objects, images and environments that surround him and transforms them through different physical processes.

Paul Paiement was born in Minnesota and currently lives and works in Long Beach, California. Paiement received his B.F.A from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, and his M.F.A from the University of Southern California. Paul Paiement's paintings attempt to reconcile the differences between inorganic, synthetic elements of culture with the organic elements of the natural world through the visual languages of linear/atmospheric perspective, representation/abstraction, and the use of layering.

Danny Shain was born in Glendale and currently lives and maintains a studio practice in Pasadena, California. Shain received his B.A from Pitzer College in Claremont. Danny Shain's canvases suggest elements of landscape, figuration, and abstraction. The architectonic structures which pervade Shain's canvases are influenced by freeway signs, and most often the backs of the signs which reflect the light around them and reveal the supports which hold them in space. Like the city, the artist's work is a collage of elements, some old, and some new, that physically embody in a complex collision of chance and intent, abstract and real, a palpable expression of intersection.

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