

For Immediate Release

Cynthia Ona Innis

Lookout

6 January – 2 March 2024

Opening Reception: Saturday, January 6th, 5:00 – 8:00pm

Marking her ninth solo exhibition with our gallery, Cynthia Ona Innis will present *Lookout* kicking off our 2024 exhibition program. The show will include a new series of mixed media paintings and a two-channel video projection.

Continuing with her investigation of the effects of light on the landscape, weather patterns and stages of the sun and moon, Innis creates abstract paintings through a series of processes that tap her experience as a type of lookout. The new work focuses on her collective observations of locale growing up in San Diego and living in the Bay Area and Idaho and her explorations in the different and similar environments unique to each. Through a series of processes, Innis physically pours and applies pigments directly on to fabrics, at times using caustic bleach to remove color and acrylic and ink to add more painted information. She often builds up areas of the surface with densely painted and saturated pigments while letting the splashes and drips of paint mark the canvas as proof of her experience. The manipulated fabrics include cotton, canvas, nylon, and silver lamé that are cut into strips and reassembled as striated compositions mimicking the kinetic energy of natural processes. Bringing together congruent and contrasting painted and stitched sections, these discontinuous bands of fabric suspend and intertwine different moments alluding to the remnants of experiences that are separated by time and definition. The disjunction of forms allows for multiple perspectives at once, simultaneously capturing the seen and unseen, what is above and below ground. A few of the paintings on paper include a new technique of dissolving imagery of natural environments taken from pages of National Geographic magazines and reworking the information into abstractions.

In support of the paintings, the exhibition includes a two-channel video installation entitled *Lookout* produced in collaboration with writer, Katy Dang, former editor of Idaho Arts Quarterly magazine. The video features different perspectives of a 1982 Mercedes-Benz 300D sedan as it makes its way through the winter landscape beyond the edge of urban development in Idaho starting at the bottom of Swan Falls Gorge and continuing through the high desert flats and further up to the snowy woods of the Sawtooth Mountain Range. As the car navigates the various terrains, multiple perspectives are explored from both inside and outside of the car. The two videos are projected next to each other providing simultaneous viewpoints of what is to come and what is in the past. Much like the duality that exists within Innis's painting, *Lookout* echoes the drama of contrasting the beauty and freedom of the open spaces with the perilous and rugged landscape, contemplating what lies ahead and what follows behind. The video explores the significance of the journey, familiarity of place, isolation and a physical and psychological passage within Idaho. Innis's reflections are personal and draw on her memories of living in Boise as well as her childhood travels from San Diego to the Eastern Sierra in her aunt Ona's Mercedes. Further reflections of capturing the instantaneous moments while looking into a rearview mirror or out of a window from a moving car are recorded with flashes of the quiet and limitless expanse where gulch, desert and mountain converge on the lonesome road.

Innis received her BA in Art Practice from the University of California, Berkeley and her MFA from Rutgers University in New Jersey. In early 2023, she exhibited in a two-person exhibition at Xela Institute of Art with Katherine Sherwood, a mentor during her undergraduate years at UC Berkeley. Innis was recently included in the exhibition, *Landscape through the Eyes of Abstraction* at the California Museum of Art Thousand Oaks and had a virtual solo show (due to Covid19) in the *Currents Gallery* at the Monterey Museum of Art. Past museum shows include *Excellence in Fibers VIII* in conjunction with Fiber Art Now magazine at the San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles; *Gem State* at the Sun Valley Museum of Art; *Plus 2/Pix from 122* at PS122 in New York; *Art and Activism: Drawing the Line* at the Children's Museum of the Arts in New York; *NextNewPaper* at the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art; and *Selections: The Intuitionists* at The Drawing Center in New York among others. Innis is a recipient of the Barbara Deming Memorial Fund grant, Parent Artist Residency Award at Kala Art Institute and a Sustainable Arts Foundation grant. Innis's work was recently acquired by the Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers University in New Jersey and she is in the collections of the Art in Embassies Program in Riga, Latvia; Achenbach Collection in San Francisco; Berkeley Art Museum Pacific Film Archive; San Jose Museum of Art; Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento; County of Alameda, California; City of Lafayette, California; and Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula, California.