

TAYLOE PIGGOTT GALLERY

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TAYLOE PIGGOTT GALLERY ANNOUNCES *SECRETS IN PLACE*
AN EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS BY OLIVE AYHENS

Exhibition Dates: 14 December 2023 – 4 February 2024

JACKSON HOLE, WYOMING – TAYLOE PIGGOTT GALLERY is pleased to present *Secrets in Place*, a solo exhibition of work by artist Olive Ayhens, on view December 14th, 2023 through February 4th, 2024. An artist reception will be held on Thursday, December 14th, from 5 to 7 pm. The artist will be in attendance. All are welcome.

Secrets in Place, Ayhens's first exhibition at Tayloe Piggott Gallery, presents a selection of oil paintings and ink and watercolor works from the mid-1990s to the present. For the past forty years, Ayhens has focused much of her practice on the creation of environmental allegories, each as whimsical as they are catastrophic, which fuse antithetical and imaginary worlds into "jumbled panoramas," according to *Hyperallergic's* Stephen Maine. Her inventive contemporary landscapes amalgamate nature and man-made environments, creating implausible realms of juxtaposed skyscrapers perched on cliffsides on Northern California, as seen in *Bejeweling the Massif* (2009), or bustling traffic in a remote desert, as seen in *Outskirts of Roswell* (2014). Critic Jerry Saltz has described Ayhens's work as "intertwining postapocalyptic narratives and prelapsarian bliss... Part Bosch, part Coney Island of the mind's eye, these works place us inside scenes of destruction as curious gods look into and down on widening worlds."

Simultaneously collapsing and expanding, corkscrewing and unraveling, Ayhens's compositions evolve more or less autobiographically, taking from the many places where she has spent time, especially through the numerous residencies she has been awarded throughout her career. Ayhens strives to capture an essence of each place she composes, reconceptualizing, distorting, and rebuilding these places from her memory, her subconscious and, most importantly, from her imagination. Ayhens has taken care to deeply absorb the places she has spent time, as even her works featuring fragmented and amalgamated loci impart a profound and idiosyncratic sense of place. Her warping of space and place often imbues potent environmental implications into her works. Even so, in Ayhens's creations, as *The New Yorker's* Andrea K. Scott articulates, "whimsy tends to outstrip dread."

Yellowstone (1994), *The Torrent of Venus* (1995) and *Wyoming Toad* (2010) reflect Ayhens's time spent in the American West teaching and participating in artists residencies, where she was moved by the monumental scale of nature in the Rocky Mountain region and the wondrous natural features that define it. Though the urbane does not creep into these works, each presents space in Ayhens's signature state of panoramic distortion that plays on the scale of the American West's seemingly endless expanse. These works still offer moments of caprice, as in *The Torrent of Venus*, which features a spectral red petroglyph of a nude woman ("She is me," Ayhens reveals). The works of *Secrets in Place* span almost thirty years of Ayhens's career, and are united in their play on spatial organization and scale, as Ayhens compresses and stretches uncanny realms into fantastical visions of improbable places.

Ayhens upholds that her work is grounded in abstraction. She embraces the language and aesthetics of abstract painting in her focus on exploring color relationships, texture, scale, and the compression and expansion of space. Above all, Ayhens is driven by her "love of the paint itself- with layering it, with

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building textures, et cetera.” Ayhens has long been praised for her willingness to allow realism to dissolve into pure abstraction in her color-rich, kaleidoscopic works in which linear perspective is not utilized to anchor space, but rather to destabilize it.

Olive Ayhens was born in Oakland, California, and received both her BFA and her MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute. She has exhibited her work widely throughout the United States and internationally. Ayhens has been the recipient of numerous awards and grants, including the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptors Grant, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, the Pollock Krasner Foundation Award, and the Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation Individual Support Grant. She has completed residencies at Ucross, the Walsh Sharpe Art Foundation Space Program, MacDowell Colony, Fundación Valparaiso, the Salzburg Kunsterhaus, Yaddo Artist Residency, Djerassi Artist Residency, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, the Roswell Artist Residency, the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, the Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program, and at Schwandorf International, Bavaria. Today, Ayhens lives and works in New York City.



Olive Ayhens, *Yellowstone*, 1994, oil on canvas, 36 x 50 inches



Olive Ayhens, *Bjeweling the Massif*, 2009, oil on linen, 30 ½ x 40 inches



Olive Ayhens, *Outskirts of Roswell*, 2014, oil on canvas, 44 x 52 inches

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Specializing in modern and contemporary art, Tayloe Piggott Gallery brings together artists from all over the world in a tightly curated vision. In an expansive exhibition space in downtown Jackson Hole, the gallery pursues a rigorous schedule of exhibitions representing both emerging and established artists.

From first time buyers to seasoned collectors, the woman-owned and women-led gallery assists a wide range of clients with the intricacies of collecting contemporary art. Our staff has the knowledge and expertise to facilitate art acquisitions, advise collection management, and curate the interiors of private spaces.

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