

MEGAN WILLIAMS

February 17–April 9, 2022

Parker Gallery is proud to present a solo exhibition of new paintings and drawings by Los Angeles-based artist Megan Williams.

Since the 1990s, Williams has drawn humorous and energetic scenes reflecting the dizzying pace and absurdity of contemporary existence. Her psychologically complex works on both paper and canvas are deeply rooted in a commitment to drawing, stylistically echoing an early era of cartoon history. The cartoonish aspects offer visceral immediacy and point towards a childlike way of assessing the world as both ominous and gleeful. Some of the works are tender, while others express perverse states of mind.

Williams has been based in Los Angeles since 1974. She attended Cal Arts during a historically significant era in the 1970's, alongside artists that went on to define West Coast art in the decades to follow. Williams contributed to this conceptually rigorous period in Los Angeles with nine solo gallery exhibitions. Her institutional shows include Santa Monica Museum of Art (1990), as well as participation in significant group exhibitions such as *Helter Skelter: L.A. Art in the 1990s* curated by Paul Schimmel at MOCA, Los Angeles (1992) and *Bad Girls West* curated by Marcia Tanner at the UCLA Wight Art Gallery (1994).

For her first exhibition at Parker Gallery, Williams will debut new works completed this year. Her largest piece in the exhibition, *Big Sink*, is a swirling shipwreck of elements, water, sky, a rubber duck and a life preserver surrounding a centrifugal center point. The force of the composition requires ten panels to contain it, circling like a cyclone yet about to break apart.

In another painting, Williams returns to the image of a burning anthropomorphic building, a subject the artist has revisited since the 2008 financial crisis. Recalling the work of Italian Futurists or the climactic scene in Nathanael West's novel *The Day of the Locust*, Williams' unwitting figure provides a cathartic dark humor in our current crisis era defined by unfettered development. Employing a central floating image suspended in an ahistorical netherworld, Williams' works are the product of the artist's continual search for something unconscious and undigested—an attempt to construct pictures offering some small truth.

Megan Williams (b. 1956, Cleveland, Ohio) lives and works in Topanga, CA. She received a BFA in 1978 from California Institute of the Arts, Valencia. Her work has been the subject of one-person exhibitions at the Fine Arts Gallery, University of California, Irvine (1993); the Santa Monica Museum of Art (1990); and the University Art Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara (1990). Her group exhibitions include *Bad Girls West* curated by Marcia Tanner, Wight Art Gallery, University of California, Los Angeles (1994); *Helter Skelter: L.A. Art in the 1990s* curated by Paul Schimmel, MOCA, Los Angeles (1992); *Fall Selections '91*, The Drawing Center, New York (1991); *Excavations, Five Installations*, Otis Art Institute, Los Angeles (1988); *The Los Angeles-New York Exchange*, Artists Space, New York (1983); *Drawings: Komoski, Miller, Williams*, Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (1981); and *Matrix 10*, the University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley (1978). Her work is included in the collection of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.