



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Palo Alto Art Center Exhibition Features Artists Inspired by Dioramas

'Through That Which Is Seen' Incorporates Sculpture, Photography, Painting, and Video



From left: Michael McMillen, *Della Sala (Interior with stairs)*, 1985, Mixed Media, 16 x 12 x 15 in. (40.6 x 30.5 x 38.1 cm), Courtesy of LA Louver Gallery ; Gregory Euclide, *All of Your Diamonds Slipped Green Points Into the Ease of Not Knowing*, 2012, acrylic, astilbe, Buckthorn root, fern, found foam, foam insulation, moss, paper, pencil, sedum, sponge, sycamore seed, wood, 49 x 49 x 9 in. , Courtesy of Hashimoto Contemporary; Wendy Red Star, *Four Seasons*, 2006, Four Archival pigment prints, Lender: Nathan Larramendy at Visions West Contemporary, Denver.

PALO ALTO, CA– The concentrated world of dioramas will be used to tell big stories during the *Through That Which Is Seen* exhibition at the Palo Alto Art Center January 20-April 8, 2018. The free exhibition will include sculpture, photography, painting, and video spotlighting the use of dioramas in contemporary art.

“Dioramas capture the imaginations of viewers of all ages,” says Palo Alto Art Center Director Karen Kienzle. “These accessible works provide us glimpses into new and unexpected worlds and in turn encourage us to see the world around us in novel ways. We are honored to showcase this exhibition featuring the work of a diverse range of contemporary artists and look forward to inspiring our audiences with the power of dioramas!”

The history of dioramas goes back at least as far as 2600 BC, when ancient Egyptian royalty and nobles were buried with carved illustrations of everyday life, including boats setting sail, granaries, and scenes of bread and beer preparation. They were meant to ensure that the deceased would be taken care of in the afterlife, and included tremendous detail. For example, at least two boats were usually placed in tombs—one rigged for sailing south with the prevailing winds, and one rigged for rowing north with the current of the Nile.

(more)

Much can be said about why the practice of creating miniature worlds persists, and in particular why so many contemporary artists find this art form to be a useful tool of expression. Dioramas can turn even the most mundane of subjects into something special and worthy of attention; they direct focus and consideration on their narratives, encouraging an extended gaze; they are a means of escape from the everyday and a window into the dream world; they facilitate a suspension of belief; and at their best, like those earliest examples, blend fantasy and reality so seamlessly we are magically transported into another dimension.

Each of the artists in this exhibition wants to tell you a story. Some of these stories are full of alienation and dark humor, and some crystalize a feeling of foreboding or a coming or recent apocalypse, like those of Michael McMillen and Timothy Paul Myers. Others are carefully crafted social commentaries, either about current events or about the controversial history of the diorama itself, like those of Wendy Red Star. Many are pure reverie, as in the work of Matthew Albanese and Didier Massard. All of them reflect the careful craftsmanship and inner dream worlds of their makers.

A special Friday Night at the Art Center opening celebration will be held on January 19, 2018, 7-10 p.m., featuring an opportunity to meet some of the exhibiting artists, artmaking activities, music, food, and a cash bar. Palo Alto Art Center Foundation members are invited to participate in a walkthrough of the exhibition with the Art Center Director from 6-7 p.m.

About the Palo Alto Art Center:

The Palo Alto Art Center is your place to discover art. See, make, and be inspired because everyone is an artist. Created by the community, for the community in 1971, the Palo Alto Art Center provides an accessible and welcoming place to engage with art. We serve approximately 100,000 people every year through a diverse range of programs.

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