

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ellen Harvey
Ena Swansea
Sight Unseen

January 9 through February 21, 2015

Reception:
Friday, February 6, 5:30–7:30 pm

Gallery hours:
Tue–Sat: 10 am–6 pm



(L) Ena Swansea, *14th St Pile Field 5*, 2013 (detail), oil on graphite on canvas
(R) Ellen Harvey, *New Forest/The Internal Revenue Service Reforested*, 2013 (detail), acrylic, oil, and varnish on 20 panels

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Locks Gallery is pleased to present a two-person show of the works of Ellen Harvey and Ena Swansea on view from January 9 through February 21, 2015. There will be a reception on February 6th from 5:30 to 7:30 pm.

Both artists have expanded the way one can encounter painting through their signature styles—Harvey with her inventive conceptual installations and engraved mirrored-plexi works and Swansea with her oil on graphite paintings. While Harvey plays with art historical motifs and Swansea presents cinematic or almost dream-like scenes, they are united by their explorations of light, vision, and the human landscape. On view from both artists are works in traditional oil paintings alongside recent pieces that toy with our perception through unusual material experimentation. Each artist has previously had two solo exhibitions and been included in two group shows at the gallery.

Ellen Harvey's *New Forest/The Internal Revenue Service Reforested* is a multi panel painting that imagines the architecture of Andover's Internal Revenue Service building reclaimed by plants. Ruins are a recurring subject of exploration for the artist. Building off of conceptual threads she began with installations like *The Alien's Guide to the Ruins of Washington, D.C.*

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at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in 2013 and *Mirror* at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 2005, she continues to imagine how our human landscape would be perceived if abandoned. This monotone painting takes its composition from a recent sandblasted glass mirror installation commission at the very IRS building it depicts. *New Forest* will be joined by *Sunset* and *Moonrise*, new mirrored plexi light box engravings. These inherently call attention to the play with negative and positive space drawn with light in this medium and continue her exploration of seascapes which Harvey developed in her *Arcade/Arcadia* installation.

For the first time examples of Ena Swansea's early paintings will be on view alongside recent oil on graphite works. Making permanent the ephemeral nature of shadows could be a futile effort, yet works like *Black and White Shadows* and *Purple Shadows* evoke the sensation of seeing rather than painterly mimicry. Fluidly, her explorations of shadows have developed into an equal fascination with light. The unusual effect of paint on the quasi-reflective surface of graphite allows Swansea to cleverly experiment with figure-ground relationships. Her exploration of the effect of light on surfaces like water can be both the subject and embodied by the very nature of the medium itself. In dialogue with the fabricated ruins painted by Harvey, a series of Swansea's recent paintings feature real ruins of the wooden pile fields in the Hudson River.

Jacques Lacan in his essay "The Line and Light" explored the important distinctions between understanding the subject and looking at the picture, and differentiating between the eye and the gaze. Lacan argued that the eye cannot be fully understood through a simple description of its function, as we experience our vision through desire and subjective experience. This too, is true of painting and image-making. Harvey and Swansea utilize illusory effects in their medium to magnifying this reality for the viewer—transcending the act of painterly depiction into explorations of perception, change, and the uncanny.

Ellen Harvey is a New York-based interdisciplinary artist who will debut a new major commission at the Barnes Foundation this coming fall. Using the metalwork in the famed collection as the subject of new paintings, Harvey aims to invert the relationship of painting to these functional and decorative objects that Barnes hung in his salon-style installations. She is a graduate of the Whitney Independent Study Program and took part in the P.S.1 National Studio Program. Harvey has exhibited extensively in the U.S. and internationally and was included in the 2008 Whitney Biennial. On view through February 1st is her new public commission and installation *The Unloved* at the Groeningemuseum in Bruges. Harvey continues to garner acclaim for her public projects, including the New York and Chicago Transit Authorities, the Federal Government's Art in Architecture program at the I.R.S. building in Andover, NY's Percent for Art in the new Marcy Plaza, the Philadelphia International Airport, and St. Amalberga Church in Bossuit, Belgium.

Ena Swansea is a New York-based painter who has shown with Locks Gallery since 2001. Raised in North Carolina and a film major at the University of South Florida, Swansea has gone on to exhibit her work internationally. In 2008, her first museum survey was held at the Musee d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg. Swansea's first solo show at Locks Gallery was in 2002 and she has been included in group exhibitions *The Tipping Point*, *New Light*, and *Water is Best*. The artist's work is in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, Cornell University's Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Galerie Neue Meister/Albertinum Dresden, and Deichtorhallen, Sammlung Falckenberg, Hamburg. She is the recipient of a Hassam, Speicher, Betts and Symons Purchase Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In 2010, Swansea created a memorable art installation in the ancient Roman arena of Arles—a sand painting measuring 150 x 300 feet. She was the first American artist selected to create a "Goyesque" for the arena.