

Eureka: New Works by Jane Irish

September 1–October 13, 2023



Jane Irish, *Cosmos 1*, 2023, oil on linen with clear gesso ground, 56 x 50 inches

Locks Gallery is pleased to present *Eureka: New Works by Jane Irish*. The exhibition will be on view from September 1 through October 13, 2023.

Through the merging and layering of temporal references, Irish's paintings draw attention to how violence resurfaces through tradition and aesthetics. Many of these works were inspired by the artist's reading of Edgar Allan Poe's *Eureka: A Prose Poem*, framed by his dystopian vision in *Mellonta Tauta* (1849), which translates to "things of the future." Poe's notion of the universe in constant expansion, condensation, and re-creation is present in Irish's layering, melting, and evaporating of historical narratives, which are squeezed yet suspended within each canvas. While Poe proposed that The Universe is governed by the singular repulsive force referred to as "electricity," Irish insists on rendering this all-encompassing energy visible in order to move beyond its power and toward a more peaceful future.

In recent years, Irish has pursued a deeper engagement with the dark and brooding scenes of Renaissance works such as French verdure tapestries and Italian altar sketches, many from the Princeton University Art Collection. Six new paintings – three interiors and three 'cosmos' – will be displayed among a number of earlier paintings and ceramics, in which she has employed these classical and often brutal narratives to bridge historical tragedies with modern realities. The interior paintings combine rococo design styles, imagery of violence taken from Renaissance reliefs and sketches, and still lifes of the artist's own surroundings to create intricate and hallucinatory architectural spaces.





Jane Irish, *Tapestry Walls*, 2023, oil on linen with clear gesso ground, 56 x 50 inches

The 'cosmos' paintings layer contemporary imagery of classical figures, protesters, and Vietnam War veterans, suspended without gravitation or linear time.

"My purpose is to engage the viewer to let go of the history of atrocity, even as we acknowledge its reality, and move to an ecstatic future... As the swirling phantasmic paintings unfold, they reveal complexity and turmoil under the surface beauty and suffering of the world."—Jane Irish

Jane Irish (b. 1955) received her BFA from the Maryland Institute of Contemporary Art in 1977 and her MFA from Queens College, CUNY, in 1980. Her work has been the subject of exhibitions at institutions including the Philadelphia Museum of Art; Walker Art Center; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Contemporary Arts Center, New Orleans; Delaware Center for Contemporary Art; the Fabric Workshop & Museum; and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, among others. Irish has been the recipient of numerous grants and awards including a Pew Fellowship in the Arts (2011); Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant (2009); and National Endowment for the Arts Painting Fellowship (1982). Irish has been commissioned for several site-specific works including *Antipodes* (2018) at Lemon Hill Mansion in Philadelphia. Her work is held in public collections including the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington DC; Philadelphia Museum of Art; and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, among others. She lives and works between Philadelphia and York Springs, PA.

Eureka: New Works by Jane Irish will be on view in the first floor gallery and open to the public Tuesday through Saturday, 10am - 6pm or by appointment.

For all press inquiries, please contact Adrianna Brusie, abusie@locksgallery.com.