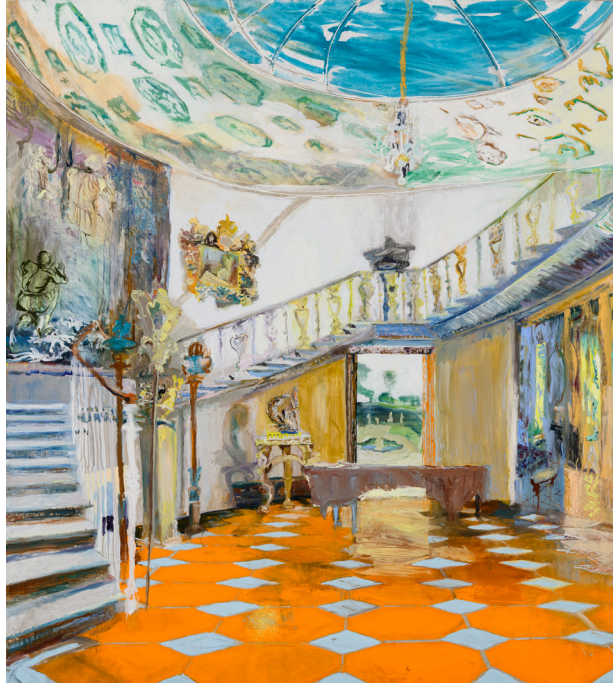


JANE IRISH

An Absolute Reciprocity of Adaptation

October 3 – November 15, 2025



Jane Irish, *Archimedean Spiral*, 2024
oil on linen with clear gesso ground, 56 x 50 inches

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Locks Gallery is pleased to present *An Absolute Reciprocity of Adaptation*, an exhibition of new and recent paintings by Jane Irish (b. 1955). This marks the artist's tenth solo exhibition with the gallery.

Excavating traumas of war and colonialism and embedding these histories into elaborate architectural settings, Irish's disorienting scenes are layered with multiple visual narratives. Of this new body of work, the artist says:

"Painting representationally or figuratively can be an act of imagination, but entails a code of truth, especially of the interior... The depictions of colonialism and the luxury items in French chateaus, which are often my subject matters, have an overt or covert connection to world systems of exploitation, including especially French involvement in Indochina...I try to exploit a certain doubleness: a harsh critique coexisting with the optimism of political prefiguration."

Foregrounded by prefigurative politics—an activist approach to ideating a future society—her work analyzes the roots of Western painting and exposes its violent remnants. Within the title, "An Absolute Reciprocity of Adaptation", she reinterprets the concept of symbiosis drawn from Edgar Allan Poe's epic poem *Eureka*. Focusing on a reciprocal adaptation of ideas and mediums, Irish understands how these relations produce a "prefiguration of peace." Her persistent interest in the cultural memory of the American War in Vietnam reappears in these new works, including references to the anti-war group Vietnam Veterans Against The War (VVAW), which the artist has worked with for decades.



Jane Irish, *Return*, 2025, oil on linen with clear gesso ground, 55 x 64 inches.

In a large painting on bamboo paper titled *Our Testimony* (2025), she embosses the VVAW preamble from a 1971 U.S. Congressional record atop an ornately decorated living room. In another painting titled *Agent Orange* (2025), Irish calls to mind the pollutant used in herbicidal warfare programs with a muddy, darkened palette, while mutating, floating apparitions haunt the room and her 2021 painting *Phosphorous* hangs on the wall. Of the painting, Irish says, “I emphasize the violence in the room’s decor. With a breaking heart I ask, ‘Why wouldn’t we repeat and preserve the abuse and killing since we idolize our lives around these acts?’”

Meta references continue in *Return* (2025), where she transforms her series of colonial scenes titled *Decay Puits Sauvage* (2025) into a phantasmic wallpaper. Paintings of the decaying wall are shown alongside the semi-fictionalized setting in *Return*, signaling a spiral of meaning and “coevolution.” Juxtaposing images of colonial violence with the indigenous Vietnamese cloud flooring, Irish’s room becomes both contemplative and confrontational.

Also on view is a large-scale study for Irish’s Renaissance-style ceiling painting titled *Cosmos Beyond Atrocity* (2024), which was commissioned for the new building of the Princeton University Art Museum. Mounting the study as a wallpaper and hanging drawings in front, the installation presents Irish’s adaptive process to illuminate the layered temporalities and spatial collisions.

Jane Irish (b. 1955) received her MFA in 1980 from Queens College, CUNY. She got her start as an artist in the East Village in the 1980s and moved to Philadelphia in 1982. She has exhibited at the Philadelphia Museum of Art; Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, PA; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN; Delaware Center for Contemporary Art, Wilmington, DE; the Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD; Contemporary Arts Center, New Orleans, LA; and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX. She is the recipient of a Pollock-Krasner Artist Grant (2025), a BAU Institute Arts Residency Award from the Camargo Foundation (2025), a Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Biennial Grant (2024), a Pew Fellowship in the Arts (2011), a Painters and Sculptors Grant from the Joan Mitchell Foundation (2009), a Painting Fellowship from the Pennsylvania Council of the Arts (1984), and a Painting Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts (1982). Her work is held in public collections including the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, the Princeton University Art Museum, and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden.