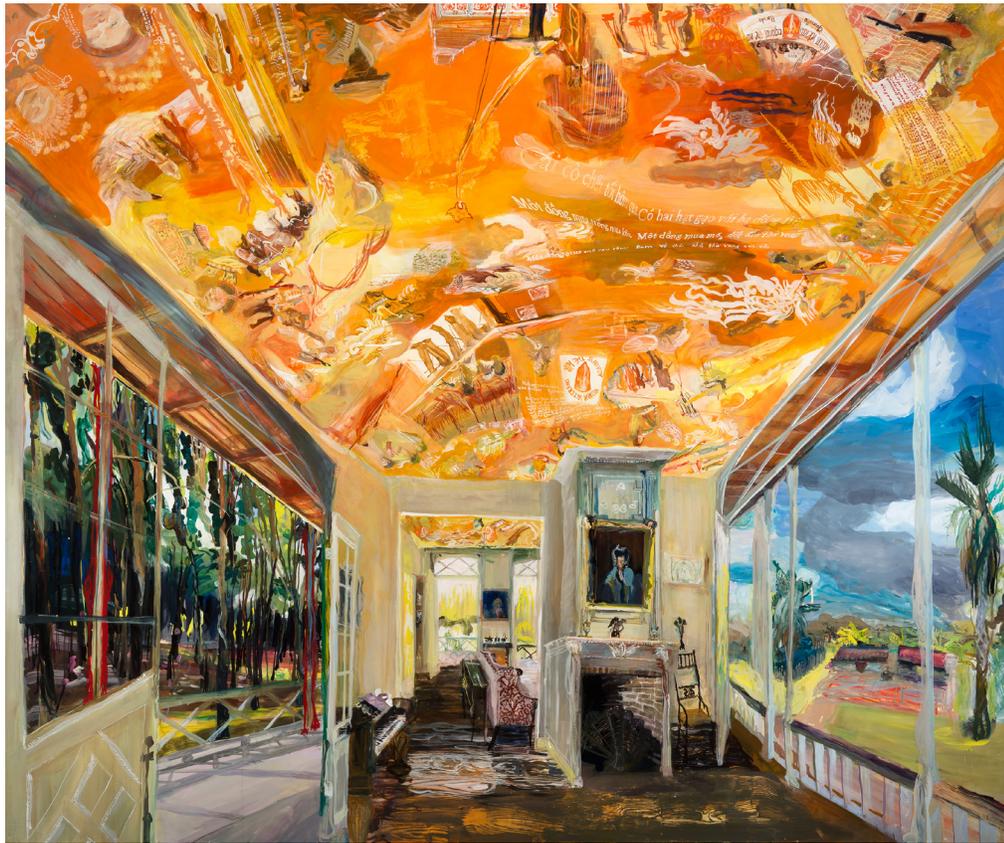


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Contact: Locks Gallery  
T 215-629-1000/F 215-629-3868  
info@locksgallery.com

LOCKS GALLERY



*Plantation*,  
2017  
egg tempera  
on linen  
62 x 74 in

## Jane Irish *Architectures of Resistance*

April 6 – May 25, 2018

Opening Reception: Friday, April 6, 2018

Locks Gallery is pleased to announce an installation of new works by Philadelphia artist Jane Irish. *Architectures of Resistance* debuts a series of large-scale canvases and works on paper depicting interior spaces in which vibrant ceiling murals bloom with imagery of Western colonialism alongside imagery of Vietnam War conflict and protest. The exhibition will run concurrently with a major site-specific installation of paintings and ceramics inside Philadelphia's historic Lemon Hill Mansion, organized by Philadelphia Contemporary. With the mansion's ties to the colonial legacy of early American culture, the project provides a unique expansion of the artist's studio practice and a rich counterpart to her work in the gallery.

600 Washington Square South  
Philadelphia PA 19106  
tel 215.629.1000 fax 215.629.3868  
info@locksgallery.com  
www.locksgallery.com

[continued on reverse]



Irish's paintings utilize architecture as embodiments of historical power structures, or as vessels that can accumulate and emulsify disparate moments in time. Her newest works emphasize the ceiling as pictorial space, drawing inspiration from Renaissance and Baroque murals that made ceilings into illusionistic, mythological zones. Here the ceilings overflow with a modern mythology of the War in Vietnam and opposing peace movements of the 1960s and '70s, subjects that—as in much of the artist's best-known work—speak to the enduring significance of the Vietnam era as a nexus of imperialism and resistance. Irish's most recent paintings have also been directly fueled by Edgar Allen Poe's little-known prose poem *Eureka*, an "Essay on the Material and Spiritual Universe" written in 1848 that blends history, theology, and scientific theory. The totalizing cosmology of Poe's visionary text proves foundational to the architectures of Irish's newest paintings, in which interior, temporal, and geo-political space are synthesized.

Works on paper juxtapose opulent Rococo and Neoclassical decorative styles with imagery of Vietnam War-era conflict and protest, striking contrasts that suggest causalities and continuities across history. On the large canvases, Irish's interiors are more abstracted than in her prior work, with one painting showing a ceiling-like plane floating over a richly colored swamp. In another, a blazing orange ceiling spans a plantation room in which verandas open on either side to reveal surreally opposing landscapes—to the right, a Louisiana Mississippi River Road plantation, and to the left, a south Vietnamese rubber tree grove. In *Beautiful Wreckage for E.A. Poe and W.D. Ehrhart*, the wall and ceiling framework disintegrates completely into a horizontal wave of blue above yellow, within which stunningly detailed vignettes of Vietnam proliferate, symbolizing the final passages of Poe's *Eureka*. With their impressionistic blending of global time and space, Irish's Architectures of Resistance constitute a unique form of history painting.

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Jane Irish received her MFA in 1980 from Queens College, CUNY, and has exhibited at venues including Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and Institute of Contemporary Art, PA; the Walker Art Center, MN; Delaware Center for Contemporary Art; Contemporary Arts Center, New Orleans; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; and the Baltimore Museum of Art. Irish has been the recipient of a Pew Fellowship in the Arts, a Painters and Sculptors Grant from the Joan Mitchell Foundation, a Painting Fellowship from the Pennsylvania Council of the Arts, and a Painting Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. Her work is held in public collections including the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Irish lives and works in Philadelphia.

Special thanks to the Joan Mitchell Foundation and Center.

The *Jane Irish: Antipodes* project, presented by Philadelphia Contemporary & hosted by The Fairmount Park Conservancy, will be on view at the Lemon Hill Mansion from April 13 – June 3.