

OCTAVIA

ART GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Marfa Intrigue

June 3 - July 29, 2017

Opening Reception: June 3, 6 - 8 pm

Octavia Art Gallery is pleased to present *Marfa Intrigue*, an exhibition featuring a variety of Marfa, Texas' top talent. The exhibition includes works by Martha Hughes, Charles Mary Kubricht, Ann Marie Nafziger, Michael Phelan, Sam Schonzeit, and Leslie Wilkes.

Martha Hughes's paintings include works from two different series, *Scenes* and *Setups*. In her *Scenes* series, she simultaneously explores the disorientation of being human in a manufactured world and the potential of that world. Inspired by glossy magazine spreads of carefully staged, impossibly perfect interiors and landscapes, Hughes strips these down to their barest colors, distorting angles and proportions to fabricate the momentary uneasiness one can unexpectedly feel in familiar spaces. The colors and shapes invite the viewer to dive in and become immersed in this vivid world. Paintings in the artist's *Setups* series are explorations of variations of pure color and ambiguous, vertiginous spaces.

Charles Mary Kubricht explores biography of site through the interrelationship of perception and the lenses of technology. Varying viewpoints and movement are dominant themes in her work. The black and white acrylic on canvas and gouache on paper works included in this exhibition challenge the model of figure-ground relationship with the absence of clearly distinguishing separations of foreground and background. These pieces examine the transitional zone between the perceptual experience and technologies of visualization in which the prosthetic lens creates a highly pictorialized and artificial universe.

Anne Marie Nafziger spends her time immersed in remote, natural areas, which has been a significant part of her life and studio practice. Vast open landscapes and beguiling wilderness areas particularly compel her and inspire her work. The abstract acrylic paintings included in this exhibition convey her visceral response to the natural world. Using bold colors and calligraphic brush strokes her works reveal a sense of gestural expressionism. Nafziger was recently elected as the mayor of Marfa, TX, with a community that holds artists in high esteem.

Michael Phelan's work critically investigates how historically specific models and cultural traditions have been absorbed, co-opted, and repurposed to fit the needs of the popular landscape. Employing both art historical and mass media references, his work re-contextualizes mundane icons of consumer culture with an eye toward both art history and Middle American 'life-styling'. For this exhibition, Phelan has produced three shaped canvas paintings, that all take the 'Tangram' as their starting point. Consisting of seven shapes called tans, the objective of the puzzle is to form a specific shape using all seven pieces. Employing these problems, Phelan's repositioning of the historical model presents both a formal and conceptual approach to the ready-made, at once transforming the everyday into the sublime.

Sam Schonzeit grew up in New York City, across the street from Donald Judd's Spring Street residence, and says that Marfa reminds him of Soho in the seventies. Schonzeit prolifically works in all sizes and mediums, including collage, painting, drawing, and sculpture. His most recent work, a series of watercolors, demonstrates the freedom he finds in Marfa to experiment, in this case with a wide variety of color and technique. Selected by Vanity Fair as "one of twelve artists who make Marfa", his watercolors capture the expanse of the Marfa landscape with a muted quality of color.

Based on the bright, psychedelic imagery of the 1960's, Leslie Wilkes' paintings on canvas and gouaches on paper are an explosion of shape and color. With near perfect symmetry, the colors of these works exhibit an opaque, smooth surface. Stimulation of the visual is of great importance to Wilkes, who chooses nuanced but dissonant colors to keep the eye moving around the paper or canvas. Slight irregularities also create subtle shifts in the pattern, as the artist does not use tape or outlines on her works on canvas.

Through varying mediums and vast styles, all six of these artist's works share a serendipitous visual dialogue, evoking the true intrigue of Marfa.