

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA MUNROE
fine art

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SMALL PAINTINGS

November 9 - December 23, 2023 & January 3 – 13, 2024

From November 9 through January 13, Victoria Munroe Fine Art presents SMALL PAINTINGS featuring paintings by **Pat Adams, Richard Aldrich, Jennifer Bartlett, Jake Berthot, Helen Blake, Elizabeth Dworkin, Will Gabaldón, Stephen Greene, Jacqueline Gourevitch, Sharon Horvath, Bruce Kurland, John Lees, Kathryn Lynch, Antonia Munroe, Adrian Nivola, Carl Palazzolo, Miklos Pogany, Fulvio Testa, John Walker, and Helen Miranda Wilson.**

Many of these artists matured during the 1970's and 80's, a period known as the *Return to Painting* that followed Minimalism and Conceptualism. In their individual gestural languages, each evolved a distinctive technique responding to Lyrical Abstraction and Expressionism, or the figurative and landscape traditions. The show encompasses several small canvases by each artist, highlighting iconic examples of their exploration of materiality, and their vision of what is worth painting.

This exhibition presents the small-scale painting as a large space in which to investigate abstraction, pattern, mark-making, and classic subjects such as still lifes, interiors, or the mist across the hills in Verona.

"Like some of my decisions in the plates were: how small is small, how large is large. Like I wanted something that was large enough to do things on but that was the smallest unit within that thing that was large enough, so I decided on one foot.

I like the feet and inches because an inch is a thing. It's, 'Oh, about an inch. Can't see an inch in front of his nose.' You don't say, 'I can't see a centimeter in front of my face.' So, that system of measurement is something that's so imbued in or so deeply weathered into the English language and thought, that we as a culture, I think both Americans and English, seem to express a lot of things by measurable distance, which is interesting because the French don't express themselves that way, which is another topic. So, the foot seemed good and it also seemed neutral. Like I have a great love, and I did at this time, of the average. You know, what is a kind of normal thing. It doesn't look too big or too small...." -Oral history interview with **Jennifer Bartlett**, 1987 June 18-September 28. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

"The small format has a more or less one to one ratio with the size of the viewers head which facilitates the marriage of one's imagination with the image. An entire world can therefore be experienced as something intimate, and so excitingly near that one's nose has to avoid the temptation of crashing the party." -**Adrian Nivola**, 2023

"Throughout my painting life I have gravitated to small paintings. The modest scale somehow makes my hand more attuned to the nuances of the paint and surface. In addition, I love the choreography which the viewer is asked to perform in their adjustment for maximal viewing distance. The work invites you to bring your face closer. A necessary intimacy." -**Carl Palazzolo**, 2023

"I have always been attracted to small paintings. I love the intimacy and the artists' use of material and technique in relation to the size. I grew up drawing cartoons and comics and the small size of that work has carried over into my painting practice. Many of the artists that have inspired me work in smaller sizes often. Artists like Robert Ryman, Wayne Thiebaud, Albert York, Giorgio Morandi, Lois Dodd and Alex Katz to name a few. Large work can have its impact as well but to me there is nothing like a really amazing work that you hold in your hands like a good book." -**Will Gabaldón**, 2023

"When I paint small paintings I am remembering when I first saw the Lindisfarne gospels in London in 1951. The illuminated manuscripts were in the scriptorium at the British Library. I really like working smaller because there is a spiritual intensity that happens and they convey feeling or certain states of mind." -**Pat Adams**, 2023

(over)

"These small paintings are memories of times in Italy and France - the inviting environments created by beautiful buildings and wonderful architecture."

"Some of the subdued colors remind me of the Renaissance frescoes in the little churches, and isolated farm environments where I would have liked to play as a child." -**Miklos Pogany**, 2012

"I like painting large and small- going between the two breaks habits. My goal in a small painting is to make it feel large. A small painting needs to be monumental in order for it not to be mistaken for something small." -**Kathryn Lynch**, 2023

"I see it as a challenge to make real the power of color, even when it's small. Sometimes it's the best way to catch my attention. They claim the wall more than a larger canvas." -**Elizabeth Dworkin**, 2023

"They were intended to draw the viewer in and to be looked at for a long time; I'm interested in how artists achieved this.

In my work, I'm interested in how a small painting might become an object of contemplation itself, in a totally non-religious sense, rather than the subject matter of the painting being the object of meditation and contemplation." -**Helen Blake**, 2023

"When I think of small painting, I think of the many Persian miniatures which I live with, and Chardin and Constable studies. I ask why am I painting big paintings? Small ones are better, everything intensifies, it has to be special. A big painting should be nailed to a tree and it has to live up to nature." -**John Walker**, 2023

"I like to explore the paradox of small paintings, whose intimate size can contain the illusion of vast spaces. Small paintings fit into our lives, our lived-in spaces in a particular way, as if they want to accompany us, add quiet notes to our domestic lives while not taking up too much space in the world. You can carry them and move them, more like cats, less like elephants." -**Sharon Horavath**, 2023

"When I paint small paintings, they often refer to vast subjects: sky or the city seen from borrowed windows on high floors which I think of as periscopes. My small paintings are usually painted away from my studio from direct observation, quickly, on the go, easily portable, unedited and with immediacy." -**Jacqueline Gourevitch**, 2023

"Most of my pictures have been small since forever, made while sitting down. Some are only 8 x 8 inches, or even smaller. A favorite size is 16 x 20 inches.

But sometimes I used to do much bigger ones, including a scroll drawing that was 6 x 21 inches!

Since 1983, after I was extremely ill for over a year, I only paint or draw sitting down. It hurt a lot to stand up at my easel for any length of time, but that year I did anyway so as to complete some larger paintings. After that, I had no appetite for doing so." -**Helen Miranda Wilson**, 2023

"I've always liked working small, faster, looser, less formal, less worried over. I sense Rouault, Constable, Corot, Morandi, Albert York, and Albert Ryder may have felt the same way.

I also think about a collector who sold most of his collection except for a small painting of mine which fit in a suitcase. I have a recurrent fantasy that we may be entering a new Migrations Period and will be wanting portability in art works." -**John Lees**, 2023

"I imagined these little paintings from hours of perusing "The Greater Perfection", the book by Frank Cabot which tells the story of his gardens at Les Quatre Vents in Quebec. The pictures of the luminescent meconopsis (blue poppy!) captivated me ~ how could I achieve that blue? That perfection?" -**Antonia Munroe**, 2023



Richard Aldrich, Carl Palazzolo, Will Gabaldón, Pat Adams & Bruce Kurland



Kathryn Lynch, Elizabeth Dworkin, Jake Berthot, Helen Blake, John Walker

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