



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: THE PAINTED DESERT, PART I

October 5 - November 12, 2017

Opening Reception Thursday, October 5, 6-9PM

HIGH NOON is proud to present our inaugural exhibition, *The Painted Desert, Part I*. The group exhibition will include ten artists working in various media--- drawing, painting, ceramic, photography, resin, etc.--- and from different parts of the globe to highlight the diverse and shifting nature of the art world, thematically, economically, and creatively. The artists exhibited in Part I are Eleanna Anagnos, Marisa Baumgartner, Ryan Crotty, Robert Otto Epstein, Francisco Esnayra, Theresa Hackett, Jill Levine, Ali Miller, Colin Thomson, and Lindsay Walt.

Located in the four corners of Utah, Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico, the Painted Desert is a national monument that was discovered by Francisco Vázquez de Coronado in 1540 while hunting for the the Seven Cities of Cibola, located on the Zuni Pueblo in what is modern day New Mexico. The legend from various explorers before him had told of cities made of gold. When the stories turned out to be myth, he lead an expedition in search of gold to the Colorado River Valley, leading his team through the stratified layers of what he named "El Desierto Pintado."

For centuries, The Painted Desert has been symbolic for it's geographical significance, lending itself as a natural metaphor to historical and social macrocosms both natural and man-made. The fact that the monument is divided by state lines with different socio-economic, environmental, and political elements yet still manages to exist completely unto itself speaks to the creative ecology of a city like New York, wherein the thriving art world exists independent of forces which may alienate or compartmentalize it. It's own nexus of creativity, New York City is where people of all walks of life in every imaginable context come to explore their purpose, to make their mark, yet unlike the wealth-driven conquests of the early explorers, the art world has no gold standard. Like every desert, the city has a unique ecosystem that adapts to whatever conditions it is met with and through time, we witness how erosion can both reveal and conceal. Within the struggling brick and mortar model in which we see galleries expand and contract, rise and fall, there is an ecosystem of artists working within a global paradigm that continue to persevere with artistic intent, whether they be emerging, or part of significant collections. With *The Painted Desert*, **HIGH NOON** seeks to celebrate the stratified layers that make up the discourse of contemporary art, the nexus of New York City, and the ever-shifting sands.

Eleanna Anagnos' conceptually driven work comprised largely of unconventional media speak both of the economy of art and the interconnectedness of material and symbolism. **Marisa Baumgartner** uses a varied photographic and painterly practice to bring gesture into the photographic image that forces us to observe that which seems innocuous. The push and pull of illumination vs. obstruction reveals the reality of a political climate. **Ryan Crotty** highlights the visual evidence of painting referencing the rich history of California's Light and Space movement while challenging the interpretation of a two-dimensional surface. **Robert Otto Epstein** explores the boundaries between the craft and conceptual aspect of image making, purposefully utilizing kitsch elements such as fashion catalogues and pattern/embroidery to create his perceptual imagery which delivers both pop and obsessive delicacy. **Francisco Esnayra** utilizes his masterful classical technique to create multi-media sculptures that reference contemporary struggles with identity, idealism, and our relationship to coping mechanisms. **Theresa Hackett** combines a maelstrom of media that is both playful and sophisticated, dealing with formal concerns of composition and expectation of form. **Jill Levine** re-appropriates pre-Columbian iconography into a pop-cubist vocabulary in which centuries-old imagery is remixed into a contemporary sculptural form with it's historical context stretched over it like a skin. **Ali Miller** constructs fantastical, non-linear narratives with a powerful knowledge of form and space, addressing themes of expectation using extreme and surreal scenarios. **Colin Thomson** draws from a variety of sources concerned with the idea of pattern including architectural plans, Islamic tiles, and African textiles, to create his own language of abstraction that is both graphic and painterly. **Lindsay Walt** ex-plores the inherent viscosity of paint, utilizing broad washes and the most delicate of brush techniques and control of edge quality to weave together her elaborate imagery.

Please join us for the opening reception Thursday, October 5th from 6-9. Refreshments will be served. For any additional information about the exhibition or **HIGH NOON's** programming, please contact Jared Linge at jared@highnoongallery.com or call 760.519.1956.