

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
HANNA VON GOELER | *REVERSE / ALCHEMY*

September 4 - October 6, 2019

Opening Reception Wednesday, September 4, 2019, 6-8PM

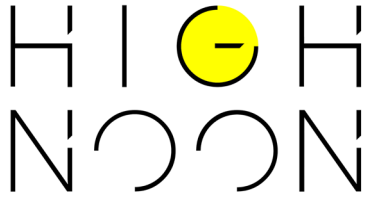
In **HIGH NOON's** first site-specific installation, the freshly laundered tableaux of artist **Hanna Von Goeler** hang pinned like prayer flags on clothes lines from wall to wall for her debut exhibition with the gallery, ***Reverse / Alchemy***. This network of clotheslines act as storylines and the paintings or rags as individual entities. Clotheslines and rags speak to issues of labor, gender, race, class, and value. They highlight the relentless work and the simple task of washing clothes that was required prior to the modern convenience of washing machines. In 1851, Christine Hardyment argues that the development of domestic machinery led to women's liberation. One can imagine clotheslines such as these, hanging in and about the tenement buildings that housed immigrants in the gallery's Lower East Side neighborhood.

"What might it have been like to be an immigrant mother in this neighborhood? I imagine families crowded into small apartments, laundry washed by hand and hung from the ceiling, dangling overhead, and the struggles that come with motherhood," Von Goeler states. "It was so unusual for a woman to be an artist in the past. A struggle to be included and not later be erased by revision. Women's creative impulses more often found expression in the decorative arts. This project seeks to celebrate and reclaim some of that feminine labor."

The rags that hang from the clothesline are made entirely of paint and unlike ordinary painting, there is no substrate or backing, turning the star of the performance into the understudy as the uninvolved surface is now the paint itself. ***Reverse / Alchemy*** refers to this transformation of one element into another, the paint becomes the canvas; riches to rags and rag to riches. As the forerunner to chemistry, Alchemy, the process of converting a base element into a precious commodity is reconsidered in Von Goeler's installation, questioning the implication of the value of material and labor, representing a sort of flux rather than a hierarchy of meaning. It allows a commingling of narrative and content to emerge as high art and craft are revealed to be two sides of the same coin.

"While making the rags, I experimented with various techniques, materials, and visual approaches. One side was inspired by the fine arts traditions of minimalism and expressionism. For the other side, I developed a method that is a cross between the decorative arts of marbling and reverse painting / verre eglomise; casting, a technique associated with sculpture; painting, printmaking and crafting. I stenciled or reverse painted life sized images of moths to create a kind of tableau. Moths and butterflies were used by Dutch still-life painters such as Clara Peeters, as momento mori symbolizing the ephemeral nature of life," says Von Goeler. Although the moth, in comparison to its more vibrantly winged brethren aren't considered symbols of beauty per se, they exemplify different stages of transformation and adaptability. During the Industrial Revolution there was an emergence of Black Peppered moths that in lieu of the more polluted, soot-filled air developed a genetic mutation that turned their once white speckled wings almost entirely black which aided their survival, denoting another form of alchemy.

We are at a crossroads in American history, where communities are being threatened by revisionism, immigrants of color are drafted as political pawns, and government officials in the highest office of the land are reinterpreting Emma Lazarus' poem on the Statue of Liberty to fit a racist agenda. Von Goeler's ***Reverse / Alchemy*** not only hangs as testimony to the resilience and adaptability of humans to develop mechanisms for survival, but also to honor and understand the various arcs of history that lead to these crossroads, and how to conversely use those intersections to find a common path forward.



Hanna von Goeler received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Rhode Island School of Design and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of California, Davis. She completed additional study at the Jan van Eyck Academy, an international post graduate program in the Netherlands.

Born in Europe, Von Goeler's family moved to the United States while she was an infant. Her father worked as a physicist at Princeton University. The international atmosphere there, as well as her bilingual upbringing and frequent travels led to her preoccupation with the fluidity of identity, culture, and perception. Her parents' wartime experiences, as well, influence her work and perspective. Her work has been shown internationally and featured in publications such as the *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times*.

Please join us for the opening reception Wednesday, September 4th from 6-8PM. Refreshments will be served, and a full-color, limited edition catalog of the exhibition will be published and available for purchase. 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.