



For Immediate Release:
MARY JONES | LES PROBLÈMES DU CONFORT

March 16 - April 23, 2023
Artist Reception: Thursday, March 16th, 4-7PM

Images are somewhere, and they have their own characteristic spatial quality... The fundamental language of depth is neither feelings, nor persons, nor time and numbers. It is space. Depth presents itself foremost as psychic structures in spatial metaphors.

-James Hillman, The Dream And The Underworld

High Noon is pleased to present **Mary Jones's** third exhibition with the gallery, **Les Problèmes du Confort**. Jones began this most recent body of work, collectively called simply, "Interior Design," by painting Sumi ink over the black and white printed pages of a comprehensive French Interior Design publication from the 1960s. "[I chose the series' title] not only to underscore the attributes of the original images, but to address their psychological component: the topos of dreams, so notably analyzed by Gaston Bachelard and James Hillman, spaces we conjure to discover the elements of our inner lives. Homes and interiors are not only spaces we remember, but also labyrinths of symbolism, familiar to all of us as emotionally charged experiences," she explains.

The addition of her signature mark making started as an exercise to identify patterns in the tonal pages, separate from the context of the imagery. It seemed to act as a compositional barometer of sorts, deflecting the space in certain areas and illuminating it in others. The painted catalog images were then collaged, blown up, printed on canvas, and painted again, further conflating space and gesture, and inhabiting the vacant interiors with a visible energy. In doing so, Jones satisfies the principles of high design with the paintings' harmonic beauty, and also the open systems of fine art by positioning the work as cultural critique that challenges the colonialist motifs that permeate the aesthetic sensibility of many of the spaces.

Jones's work has long gnawed at the malleability of subject matter. She consistently uses legible imagery to anchor her abstractions, prodding at the fickle divide between the two modalities. Her sensitivity to painting's illusionistic properties is connected to her experience as a faux painter, freelance work she's done for 25 years. While the object of faux painting is to not let the artist's hand show, Jones riffs on her craft by skillfully merging gesture and image in ways that are largely indistinguishable. She allows the marks to emulate form and object, playing on the viewer's expectations of pictorial logic and slyly addressing the disparity between fine art and design, as for many decades— and especially during painting's theoretical heyday in the second half of the 20th century— they shared a tenuous opposition. Design is associated with expense, and American society is perpetually transfixed by the Romantic notion of the artist as a working class hero.

Ionic Memories (2023), depicts a decadent room steeped in Roman busts and columns, the title a tongue-in-cheek reference to the science of memory and the unstable nature of artistic movements and empires alike. Jones echoes the velvety matte blacks of the printed image in her direct painting gestures, mixing a near perfect replica of the tone and texture for her to set up a meta tromp-l'oeil effect. In the foreground, a collaged brush stroke swipes away at the interior revealing a snowy landscape wherein a bush and modernist cabin are obscured by a swath of pink oil paint. In the context of the whole, the landscape reads as decorative forms within the room, such as fan coral and glass spheres. Other works such as **Cocteau and Table** (2023) make greater use of a fragmented effect wherein decisively multiversal looking forms cut through the composition like a glimpse into a parallel reality. Through a mix of painterly and faux elements, Jones takes care to merge her augmented realities just enough to allow the viewer to believe the image exists in one picture plane.

Perhaps to be comfortable is to momentarily resist time, to be temporarily impervious to the clamors for change. In **Les Problèmes du Confort**, Jones reminds us that the arrangements we make with ourselves are transitory, constructed illusions to describe and reflect a sense of our place in the world we know, and that improvisational beauty can be found in transitions, in languages we don't know, and in uncertainty.

Mary Jones received a BFA and MFA from the University of Colorado, Boulder. She began her career in Los Angeles and has been living and working in NYC since 1986. Jones has shown her work in galleries and museums internationally, most recently at Steffany Martz in 2022 and High Noon in 2020. Other exhibitions include the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, John Molloy Gallery, Ovsey Gallery, Cugliani Gallery, Jeffrey Coploff Fine Art, Robert Green Fine Arts, Marlborough Chelsea, and Cenci Gallery, Rome. She is in many notable collections, including the Broad Art Foundation, Los Angeles. Her work has been reviewed in the *NY Times*, *LA Times*, *Art in America*, *Artforum*, *Artnews*, *the Brooklyn Rail*, and *Whitehot Magazine*, among others and is included in the book, "L.A. Rising, SoCal Artists Before 1980," by Lyn Kienholz. Jones is a Senior Critic at RISD, where she has taught since 1998, and an instructor at SVA since 2009. As an art writer, she has also contributed to the *Brooklyn Rail*, *BOMB Magazine*, and *artcritical*.