

Fergus McCaffrey is pleased to present a selection of works by seven women artists

In Light of Shade

February 27 – April 19, 2019

*But shadows themselves are pictures/In which there live,
darting from my eyes by the thousand,/Vanished entities with
familiar faces.*

—Baudelaire, “Obsession”

Much of our ability to see ordinary material objects depends crucially on our ability to see their shadows—both those that they cast, and those that are cast upon them. But what, if anything, are shadows? Are they presences or absences? Do they have colors, or are they only variations of black and gray? ***In Light of Shade*** brings together a group of seven women who mine and explore the areas of indeterminacy between representation and abstraction, vision and blindness, light and shade. Together, the works on view provide moments of fleeting relief from the pressure to represent the world as it is, instead delving into ethereal and mundane phenomena that might otherwise escape our attention: desaturated silhouettes on a wall, sunspots that appear on the floor in mid-afternoon, flecks of dust in a ray of summer light. So, too, do these images embrace moments of non-knowing, areas of absence in which representational space disappears and the imagination takes over.



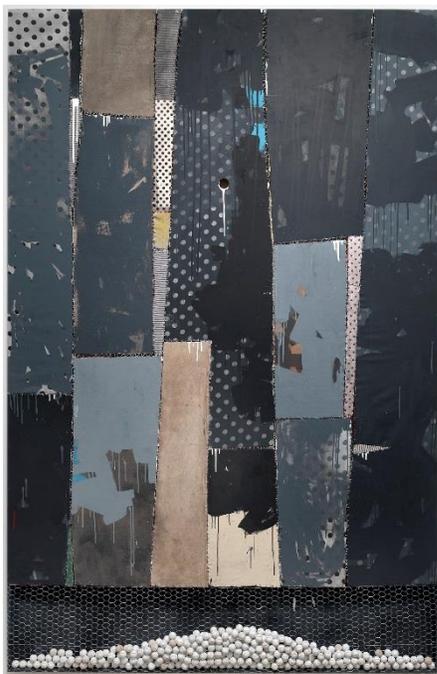
In **Anna Conway**'s elegantly composed and rigorously quiet representational paintings, the artist deploys stark contrasts in light and shadow to depict ominous, modernist narratives. In *Steady As She Goes* (2018), an eerie darkness coats the still interior of a study-like setting: the ambiguous shadowy veil gives way to voids of darkness, equally likely dusk or dawn. Conway uses her palette to create a dystopic sense of foreboding and uncertainty. **Kathleen Jacobs**'s approach is similarly meditative and procedural: Jacobs works outdoors, using tree bark as the surface upon which to begin her lines and marks. Allowing a natural patina (often for as long as two years) to weather and mature before moving the aged paintings back into her studio to paint and rework—the resulting *PITAS* (2016), complexly textured and abstract, presents a portal into an infinite landscape, simultaneously suggesting structural concerns while channeling the possibilities for dreams and adventure.

Meredyth Sparks' ongoing *Extraction* series reveal, in effect, shadows of formal, material and process-based indeterminacy. In *Extraction (Mauve Grid/Dresser Redux)* (2018), Sparks creates broad upper and lower zones that read as the juncture between carpeted floors and painted walls which frame a found photograph of an Ikea-like mirrored vanity. The extracted dresser exposes the gallery wall behind it, leaving a shard of mirror reflecting the glimpse of a domestic interior. In *Extraction (Slits/Orange and Green Stripes)* (2018), the patterned space of the canvas, its

partially-exposed support and the "painting's" abstract motif, reckon with transparency and depth, at the same time acknowledging a musical homage in the work's title, literally inserted into its folds. **Rachelle Dang** reflects on the domestic and psychological through both a contemporary and historical lens. Her almost all-white sculpture, *Seedling Carrier Both Tomb and Womb* (2019), enveloped by a profusion of flowers and vines, evokes a miniature house, sarcophagus, birdcage or crib, and lays atop a stack of shipping pallets with oversized seedpods strewn within and beneath. Based on an 18th century scientific drawing for a botanical shipping carrier – an elaborate cabinet designed to move small plant saplings from the Southern Pacific (close to the artist's Hawaiian home) to far reaching shores, the form also alludes to conflicting notions of transformation and confinement, new and old, loss and wonder.



In his *Theory of Colors*, Goethe notably drew attention to the subtle chromatic variations present in shadows, arguing that all hues are colored shadows. In *Shade Paintings: Group 9* (2014), **Marcia Hafif** extends her own career-long systematic exploration of the possibilities of pigment and process. By adding subtle amounts of black to an initial pigment, the artist produced a series of canvases in progressing shades of color that are surprisingly intense and vivid. This precise and structured approach allowed Hafif to question the practice of painting itself, investigating the structures and assumptions undergirding the medium. Likewise, for more than five decades, **Martha Jungwirth** has single-mindedly pursued an abstract practice immune to art world



trends; approaching painting as a project that is far from finished—matching light, deft, and intelligent application of color and line with shadowy and excessive moments of raw indeterminacy. Jungwirth's paintings are consistently phenomenological, and the painter uses a literally impressionistic approach to translate sensorial experience onto canvas without labored justifications of spiritual import or art historical lineage; in this way, her explorations of light and shadow stem not from thought, but from vision itself. **Sally Ross** is likewise committed to abstraction: after making a decisive break from representational painting in 2012, Ross has since been creating a series of expansive topographical canvases which are cut, sewn, and punctured, to evoke landscapes as seen from above. In *Ball Drop, Dropped Balls* (2019), the constructive mosaic-like work employs gravity, simple mechanics and varietal materials such as caged painted balls. This operation is central to Ross's approach: abstraction is relentlessly temporalized, reminding viewers that the visual realm is ever-changing, despite our efforts to create order.

About Fergus McCaffrey

Founded in 2006, Fergus McCaffrey is internationally recognized for its groundbreaking role in promoting the work of postwar Japanese artists such as Sadamasa Motonaga, Kazuo Shiraga and Jiro Takamatsu. The gallery also exhibits the work of emerging and seminal Western artists such as Marcia Hafif, Birgit Jürgenssen, Richard Nonas, Sigmar Polke and Carol Rama. In keeping with the gallery's commitment to Japanese art and culture, McCaffrey opened its Tokyo outpost in March 2018 with an exhibition of paintings by Robert Ryman. The gallery's 2019 program features solo exhibitions by Ari Marcopoulos, Patti Smith, and Jasper Johns, among others.

For press inquiries, please contact:

Tel: +1-212-988-2200

Email: press@fergusmccaffrey.com

Images:

1. Anna Conway, *Steady As She Goes*, 2018, Oil on panel, 70 x 45 inches (177.8 x 114.3 cm) © Anna Conway
2. Rachelle Dang, *Seedling Carrier Both Tomb and Womb*, 2019, Aluminum, wood, ceramic, paper clay, epoxy clay, Aqua-Resin, paint, wire, 57 x 84 x 36 inches (152.4 x 213.4 x 91.4 cm) © Rachelle Dang
3. Sally Ross, *Ball Drop, Dropped Balls*, 2019, Gesso, enamel, flashe, and spray paint on canvas and printed fabric, with chicken wire and cork balls, 137 x 88 inches (348 x 223.5 cm) © Sally Ross