

FERGUS McCaffREY, NEW YORK**ANNA CONWAY****NOVEMBER 1 – DECEMBER 23, 2017****OPENING RECEPTION: NOVEMBER 1, 6:00–8:00 PM**

Fergus McCaffrey is proud to announce our representation of Anna Conway with an exhibition of eight paintings made over the last three years. This is Conway's largest presentation to date.

Conway is a painter of extraordinary precision who challenges herself to present the diverse and often contradictory emotional geography of urban and rural North America. Her landscapes and interiors are both familiar and otherworldly, a rendering of physical locations as well as psychological states of mind. In these imagined scenes, the idealism and determination of the American dream, and the rugged beauty of the land, come up against a flinty, unyielding, man-made harshness. Human figures are scarce and emotions are restrained, yet an untold narrative may be traced in arrangements of carefully rendered objects that approach a metaphysical still life. Rather than engaging in any pictorial suspension of disbelief, Conway's suspension is anticipatory: in the stillness of the scene you wonder what will happen next? As she has said, "I like when my paintings seem to be holding their breath."

In *Devotion* (2015), two massive highway billboards appear abandoned for the projection of human aspirations, while a sleeping figure is stretched out on a cot, an inspirational poster on the wall offers an upwards view through giant Redwood trees and the promise of "Resolve." He is indifferently observed by hundreds of tagged cattle confined behind a concrete barrier, overseen by birds ominously circling a stone-grey sky. The vast modern architectural space, an industrial farm, is softened by the presence of bales of hay. Conway precisely orchestrates all the elements and visual clues in this painting, while deferring any clear resolution, as if she can paint this particular picture, but not the one in the head of the man on the cot, which compelled her to bring him into the world in the first place.



In *Haniwa* (2017), the basement interior of a modern office building frames a brooding pink and orange sunset, inhabited by a barely visible worker who is caught in a moment of personal rapture, at rest beside a floor polisher. The space is articulated by an orange power cord which snakes over a chair to power a boom-box and the floor polisher; the cord of which runs around the rear of a *Kofun* period Haniwa mask which is set on a pedestal sitting on a folding table. Set against a wall of large windows, a carefully arranged line of transparent water bottles glistens in front of a pile of discarded cardboard boxes in the exterior foreground, a Henry Moore-like sculpture in the far distance. Within Conway's triangulation of the worker, the Japanese ritual mask, and the outdoor sculpture, East/West/Southwest coordinates converge in suspended



animation. This is a place where the temperature registers our proximity by degrees and that man in a trance is anywhere but here.

Expanding upon a lineage that includes artists as varied as Vija Celmins, Paul Strand, Ed Ruscha, and Neil Jenney, Conway's navigation of the psychic landscape is highly personal. "I make images of places that I do imagine as coming from someone else's mind," she has remarked. "Even when I paint a mundane and realistic looking space ... it is a space that someone has arranged to be either a reflection or

an enlargement of themselves. The space is speaking for the person." Viewers of her painted mysteries will inevitably add, even when no one is there.

Born in Durango, Colorado in 1973, Anna Conway grew-up in Foxboro, Massachusetts. She received her BFA from Cooper Union, New York and her MFA from Columbia University. Her work first came to widespread public attention in *Greater New York 2005* at MoMA PS1. Her recent solo exhibitions include *Purpose* at Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia (2016); American Contemporary Art, New York (2013), and Guild & Greyshkul, New York (2007). Conway is the recipient of two awards from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation (2005 and 2011), an American Academy of Arts and Letters Award (2008), as well as the John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship in (2014). She lives and works in New York City.

Fergus McCaffrey gratefully acknowledges the generous loan of paintings to the exhibition from the Collezione Maramotti in Reggio Emilia, Italy.

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, Natsuyuki Nakanishi, Kazuo Shiraga, and Jiro Takamatsu. The gallery also exhibits the work of emerging and seminal Western artists such as Jack Early, Marcia Hafif, Birgit Jürgenssen, Richard Nonas, Sigmar Polke, and Carol Rama.

Images

1. *Devotion*, 2015. Oil on canvas, 44 x 73 inches (111.8 x 182.9 cm)
© Anna Conway; Courtesy of Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, Italy
2. *Haniwa*, 2017. Oil on canvas, 36 x 48 inches (91.4 x 121.9 cm)
© Anna Conway; Courtesy of Fergus McCaffrey, New York

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