

Mary Lum
temporary arrangements
April 4 – May 18, 2024



An exhibition of new work by artist Mary Lum will be on view at Yancey Richardson from April 4 through May 18, 2024. The show, *temporary arrangements*, will present 12 new paintings and three collages that deconstruct and rebuild intimate views of the urban environment inspired by walks in New York and Paris. The artist will be present at the gallery on Saturday, April 6 from 2 - 6 PM.

Lum mines aspects of daily life, vistas of architecture, design, and advertising that could easily go unnoticed. These familiar and often mundane sights are transformed into something more: juxtapositions and layers of random elements, which show both spontaneity and control, perhaps revealing a glimpse into the soul of a city.

The exhibition title *temporary arrangements* refers to Lum's journeys through the streets of New York and Paris, observing the fragments of a crumbling façade of a building, a vendor's pushcart, or a poster for a vernissage, which may have a short shelf life in the urban environment. Lum takes photographs on the streets looking at geometric forms, planes of color, and text. She pulls off bits of advertising posters that are peeling from their bases and collects printed materials – all of which are collaged in her sketchbooks, becoming the basis for her paintings. These elements provide inspiration for Lum, who creates a collision of perspectives and forms that boldly announce the delights of quiet discoveries.

Susan Cross, Senior Curator, Mass MoCA, wrote that Lum's work "*suggests the speed of daily life and the fragmented way in which we encounter language in the world. Language speeds up and slows down, much in the way that when we are walking or riding a bike in the city our pace is determined by what we notice around us. Words come together and fall apart, with each individual viewer making meaning.*"

Influenced by Cubism and Russian Constructivism, Lum is also interested in the concept of psychogeography, as practiced by members of the Situationist International movement in the 1950s and '60s. Referring to the effect of a geographical location on the emotions and behavior of the individual, one may see Lum's interdisciplinary practice as a physical manifestation of this phenomenon. Lum also finds inspiration in artist and activist Corita Kent's graphic style and fractured text as well as artist Ray Yoshida's use of comics, which tell stories with isolated fragments.

Mary Lum wrote, "*A couple of years ago I saw a William Kentridge exhibition at the Royal Academy in London. One of the things that kept jumping out at me from that show was the phrase: 'FIND THE LESS GOOD IDEA.' That painted phrase was repeated several times in various parts of the exhibition, and each time I saw it I got a little jolt of recognition. I'm not sure exactly what Kentridge meant by that phrase (it's related to his Centre for the Less Good Idea in Johannesburg), but to me it meant everything about the way I work. I took the reference to mean finding the things that are in the margins, those things that are on the periphery, those things that are between the lines, that you see out of the corner of your eye. Not through a concerted effort, but by paying attention, looking around, looking the other way. And often, later, you are not sure that you've seen these things at all.*"

Mary Lum is known for her dynamic and intricate painting and collages of elements in the urban environment. She was born in 1951 in St. Cloud, Minnesota. Lum received her BFA from the University of Michigan and her MFA from the Rochester Institute of Technology. Her work has been exhibited in numerous institutions internationally including The Drawing Center, New York; Harvard Radcliffe Institute, Cambridge, MA; Mass MoCA, North Adams, MA; deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, MA; University of Oxford, England; Kunstmuseum fur Gegenwartskunst, Basel, Switzerland; Savannah College of Art and

Design, GA; and Beijing Academy of Fine Arts, China. Lum has been the recipient of numerous awards, including a Harvard Radcliffe Institute Fellowship (2022), Guggenheim Fellowship (2010), the Radcliffe Fellowship for Advanced Study (2004-2005), and a MacDowell Colony Fellowship (2012), among others. She was a professor of painting and drawing at Bennington College in Vermont from 2004 to 2022. She lives and works in North Adams, MA.

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Image above: *Habiter Le Temps*, 2024. Acrylic on paper, 64 3/4 x 45 inches.