

Smack Mellon

92 Plymouth Street @ Washington Street, Dumbo, Brooklyn, NY 11201
Tel: 718.834.8761 | smackmellon.org | Hours: Wednesday-Sunday, 12-6pm
Contact: Eva Davis edavis@smackmellon.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Summer Wheat Inside the Garden

March 10 - April 22, 2018

Opening Reception: March 10, 6–8pm

Earth Day Reflections and Artist Talk: April 22, 11:30am–1pm



Sketch for *Inside the Garden*, 2017. Courtesy of the artist.

Summer Wheat's work investigates the materiality of paint, treating it sculpturally and pushing it into three dimensions. In her recent projects, she has been creating installations with her paintings, engaging the space and architecture. The stylized imagery of Wheat's figures and landscapes is influenced by a wide range of sources, from Egyptian pictography to Native American motifs to medieval biblical illustration.

Wheat's exhibition, *Inside the Garden*, transforms Smack Mellon's main gallery into an interior garden space that serves as a respite from the harsh realities of the outside world. This project was inspired by the gardens of antiquity, including private ones that focused on beauty and public ones, called pleasure gardens in ancient Rome, which served civic purposes. Walled gardens of ancient Egypt and classical Greece often depicted deities, creating a sacred space for reflection. In a similar way, Wheat's art environment at Smack Mellon elicits contemplation and a feeling of solace. Light filters through the botanic imagery of her window installation, creating an ethereal stained glass effect. Visitors can rest on reflective benches that represent female gardeners who support the earth, as well as the sitter. A long tapestry painting on the wall depicts floral and stellar imagery created by "weaving" paint through a mesh screen. Concerned with the need to reconnect with the natural world, Wheat is moved by the creation stories of many cultures, including Egyptian, Christian, and Native American, in which gardens figure prominently. During these troubling times, Wheat's exhibition becomes a hopeful rumination on the garden as a symbol of our link to nature and its role in generating and nourishing life.

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Born in Oklahoma City, OK, Wheat lives and works in Ridgewood, Queens. She received an MFA from Savannah College of Art and Design. In 2017, the Henry Art Gallery in Seattle presented a major solo exhibition of her work. She has also had recent solo shows at Braverman Gallery, Tel Aviv and Fridman Gallery, New York. Her work has been exhibited in museum exhibitions, including shows at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; deCordova Museum and Sculpture Park; Torrance Art Museum, Torrance, CA; and the Oklahoma Contemporary in Oklahoma City. Upcoming one-person shows at Shulamit Nazarian, Los Angeles; Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York; and Frieze New York will be presented in 2018.

Smack Mellon's exhibitions are supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council, New York City Council Member Stephen Levin, and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, and with generous support from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, The Robert Lehman Foundation, Iorio Charitable Foundation, Select Equity Group Foundation, many individuals and Smack Mellon's Members.

Smack Mellon's programs are also made possible with public funds from the National Endowment for the Arts and with generous support from The New York Community Trust, The Roy and Niuta Titus Foundation, Jerome Foundation, The Greenwich Collection Ltd, Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation Inc., and Exploring The Arts.

Space for Smack Mellon's programs is generously provided by the Walentas family and Two Trees Management.

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