

PRESS RELEASE

MICHELLE STUART: *THE NATURE OF TIME*

1 JUNE – 28 JULY 2018

OPENING: THURSDAY 31 MAY, 6-8PM

“Her books, scrolls, and codices seem selected as vehicles to figure something as elusive as the opacity of narrative and the intransigence of time”.

—Anne Wagner, *Revolution in the Making: Abstract Sculpture by Women 1947-2016*, edited by Paul Schimmel and Jenni Sorkin, Skira (2016)

Alison Jacques Gallery announces our first solo exhibition of work by Michelle Stuart (b.1933, Los Angeles, California). Featuring work from 1967-2017, this exhibition spans 50 years of Stuart's practice.

This exhibition follows a major presentation by Michelle Stuart in *Viva Arte Viva!* curated by Christine Macel at the 57th Venice Biennale (2017) and the acquisition by the Dia Art Foundation, New York of Stuart's installation of 4 earth scrolls: *Sayreville Strata Quartet* (1976), which is currently on show at Dia:Beacon. Stuart is also included in the travelling exhibition *Virginia Woolf: An Exhibition Inspired By Her Writings*, curated by Laura Smith, formerly on display at Tate St Ives (10 February – 29 April) and currently on display at Pallant House Gallery (26 May – 16 September).

Since the 1970s, Michelle Stuart has been a pioneer of non-traditional, often organic materials, creating works about transformation which collapse memory, time and place. The artist's work addresses the metaphysical while remaining profoundly rooted in its own materiality.

Stuart grew up in Los Angeles and after art school worked as a cartographical draftsman. Her fascination with Pre-Columbian cultures took her to Mexico in the early 50s, where she worked on the Teatro de los Insurgentes mural with Diego Rivera. After a period in Europe, Stuart moved to New York, where she has resided since 1957. Her multifaceted practice includes site-specific earth works often referred to as drawings 'in the landscape', painting, sculpture and photography, which all stem from the artist's lifelong interest in archaeology, anthropology, botany, literature and history.

The Nature of Time references Stuart's 1979 solo exhibition at ICA, London, *Paper Works*, curated by Sarah Kent, and includes two of the same works: *Wind Book* (1978) and *San Juan Ermita de Chiquimula* (1978). These works reference diaries and take the form of tattered, bound journals made from earth rubbings. They contain no words but act as poems about nature which enable the viewer to experience a place in a symbolic way.

Stuart's experiments with alternative mediums led to her earth rubbings, which were created through a process of smashing, rubbing and imprinting soil and rock into sheets of scroll-like paper. She drew significant inspiration from photographs of the surface of the moon, and saw parallels between her early rubbings and these lunar landscapes. A rare example of this series, *Moon* (1969) will be included in the exhibition alongside scroll works such as *#6 Kingston* (1973) and *Sayreville Quarry* (1976). In the catalogue for the ICA, London exhibition, Stuart wrote "As the paper becomes worked, to me it feels like skin, the most delicate, soft and warmest of surfaces." Lesser known bronze works which incorporate natural materials such as leaves and seeds will be shown alongside more recent photographic grids. An 88 panel work, *In the Beginning: Time and Dark Matter* (2017) shows Stuart's use of analog and digital photography, which has been her primary medium since 2009. Another new work, *Chatham Boat* (2017), a wood and linen sculpture of a ship with a rose coloured flag, completes our voyage through 50 years of work.

Recent solo museum exhibitions include: *Michelle Stuart, Theatre of Memory: Photographic Works* curated by Gregory Volk, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York (2016); *Michelle Stuart: Drawn From Nature* curated by Dr. Anna Lovatt, touring from Djanogly Art Gallery, Lakeside Arts Centre, Nottingham, UK to the Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, NY (2013) and the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, CA (2014). Recent group exhibitions include: *FORTY* curated by Alanna Heiss, MoMA P.S. 1, New York (2016); *Revolution in the Making: Abstract Sculpture by Women, 1947-2016*, Hauser Wirth & Schimmel, Los Angeles (2016); *America is Hard to See* curated by Donna De Salvo, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2015); *Ends of the Earth: Land Art to 1974* curated by Phillip Kaiser and Miwon Kwon, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles and *Haus der Kunst*, Munich (2012-2013); *On Line: Drawing Through the Twentieth Century* curated by Connie Butler and Catherine de Zehger, MoMA, New York (2010).

Major museum acquisitions include Tate, London; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; the Menil Collection, Houston; the Dia Art Foundation, New York, the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. and The Centre Pompidou, Paris. Monographs include *Michelle Stuart: Drawn from Nature*, by Anna Lovatt (Hatje Cantz: 2013) and *Michelle Stuart: Sculptural Objects Journeys In & Out of the Studio*, (Charta: 2010), featuring an essay by Lucy Lippard.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: info@alisonjacquesgallery.com

FORTHCOMING EVENT: *39 Years On: Michelle Stuart in conversation with Sarah Kent, Wednesday 6 June, 2018, 6.30pm, The AIBright Private Members Club.*

For further information, visit www.alisonjacquesgallery.com

FORTHCOMING EXHIBITION: HANNAH WILKE: 25 SEPTEMBER – 10 NOVEMBER 2018

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