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Contact: Garth Greenan
(212) 929-1351
garth@garthgreenan.com
www.garthgreenan.com

Alexis Smith: Hello Hollywood

Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to announce *Alexis Smith: Hello Hollywood*, an exhibition of collages and installations at **545 West 20th Street**. Opening on Thursday, May 24, 2018, the exhibition is the first presentation of the artist's vintage work in a New York gallery in more than 25 years. Eight of the artist's meticulously crafted, mixed-media narrative collages will be on view, as well as the monumental installations *Hello Hollywood* (1980) and *Isadora* (1980). A fully illustrated catalogue will accompany the show, with an essay by Anthony Graham.

Composed of thirteen distinct elements, the exhibition summarizes Smith's search during the 1970s for an American voice through the writings of early twentieth-century authors. Architecturally-scaled wall paintings enhance the mood of many of the collages, including power lines, palm trees, and a train's locomotive. *Isadora*, taken from John Dos Passos' *The Big Money*, chronicles Isadora Duncan's loss of innocence and dramatic death by strangulation—infamously, the dancer's scarf got caught in the wheel of a friend's Bugatti.



Isadora, 1980

The somewhat sparer *Hello Hollywood* enshrines the roadside advertisements for Burma Shave that dotted America's landscape until about fifty years ago. Each of the five wood-framed parallelograms contains one line of a ditty presented much like the sequential signs that characterized the Burma Shave advertisements. Installed on top of one row of palm trees and one row of powerlines both of decreasing height and proximity, Smith plays on the steadily receding perspective experienced in driving. Bales of hay reinforce the rural setting of this kind of commercial "literature," while infusing the space with the evocatively rich aroma of dried grass—far from the stale smell of the city.

In many of Smith's works, the city of Los Angeles appears as part of the subject. The artist exploits the universal allure and fascination around Hollywood as a place where both dreams are made and imagination, hope, and illusion are realized. According to Smith, this is an extension of the story of the West, that a move west equals a better life. It is the quintessential American transformation myth, the American Dream.

(more)

Accompanying the exhibition, there are two recreations of historic window installations in the Schwartz Plaza, between West 3rd Street and West 4th Street, just south of Washington Square Park. One is a re-staging of *Autumn Sonata*, originally installed in Downtown Los Angeles in 1979; the other, *Stairway to the Stars*, was originally installed in Graz, Austria in 1979.

Born in Los Angeles in 1949, Alexis Smith studied painting at the University of California, Irvine. She has exhibited extensively, including shows with Mizuno Gallery (1974, Los Angeles), Whitney Museum of American Art (1975, 1991, New York), Nicholas Wilder Gallery (1977, Los Angeles), Holly Solomon Gallery (1977, 1978, 1979, 1981, 1983, New York), Rosamund Felsen Gallery (1978, 1980, 1982, Los Angeles), Margo Leavin Gallery (1985, 1988, 1990, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1999, 2003, 2009, Los Angeles), Walker Art Center (1986, Minneapolis), Wexner Center for the Arts (1997, Columbus, Ohio), Greenberg Van Doren Gallery (2001, 2004, New York), and Honor Fraser Gallery (2013, 2016, Los Angeles).

The artist's work has also been included in many important museum exhibitions, such as *American Narrative: 1967–1977* (1977, Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston), *Making Their Mark: Women Artists Move into the Mainstream, 1970–1985* (1989, Cincinnati Art Museum), *Image World: Art and Media Culture* (1989, Whitney Museum of American Art), *Sunshine & Noir: Art in L.A., 1960–1997* (1997, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art), and *Made in California: Art, Image, and Identity* (2000, Los Angeles County Museum of Art).

Most recently, Smith was included in *Los Angeles: Birth of an Art Capital* (Centre Georges Pompidou, 2006), *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (2007, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles), *Under the Big Black Sun: California Art, 1974–1981* (2011–2012, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles), and *Physical: Sex and Body in the 1980s* (2016, Los Angeles County Museum of Art).

A retrospective of Smith's work is currently being organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego.

Smith's work is featured in the collections of major museums around the country, including the Hammer Museum, University of California, Los Angeles; the High Museum of Art, Atlanta; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Museum of Modern Art; the Walker Art Center; and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to represent **Alexis Smith**.

Alexis Smith: Hello Hollywood will be on view at **Garth Greenan Gallery, 545 West 20th Street** (between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues), through **Saturday, June 30, 2018**. The gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday, 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. For more information, **please contact the gallery at (212) 929-1351, or email info@garthgreenan.com**.

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