

JAMES HARRIS GALLERY
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PRESS RELEASE



Claire Cowie “Blind Spot”
June 1 to July 20, 2024
Gallery Hours:
Wed to Sat 11:30-5:30PM
and by appointment
Reception: June 1, 4-6PM

Left: “Dusk” 2024, Mixed media on paper
46” x 30 ½”
Right: “Not Waving” 2024, Mixed media on
paper, 46” x 30 ½”

James Harris Gallery is pleased to present our tenth exhibition with artist Claire Cowie. Her first at our new gallery in Dallas. Paper has been the artist’s primary material. Like much of Cowie’s past work, the six pieces in the exhibition use multiple perspectives and multiple points of view. Titled “Blind Spot”, the artist questions ideas of what we see, what we ignore, and what we think we perceive. Her deliberate conflation of positive and negative space and intense patterning creates circuitous paths that lead the viewer through Cowie’s personal visual archive which entangles public observation and private introspection. Along with direct application of pigment, she has repurposed her previous watercolors and prints along with pieces of fabric that embellish and enhance her work, a cacophony of referential imagery as well as abstract forms.

All the works in the show are similar in scale and evoke the size of a standard double hung window. The artist continues her interest in exploring the parameters of fenestration. The work “Dusk” is divided into multiple panes in which the artist depicts birds, animals, and figures combined with areas of brightly hued geometric patterns. Shifting scale and pathways create visual depth while saturated color pulls your eye back to the surface. Each element highlights the fragmentation of memory, and space and time collapse as multiple narratives unfold. In the bottom right, a woman stands regally reminiscent of a Greek or Roman Goddess, a chicken stares at her face while behind her in the landscape is an electrical tower. In another section above on the left, a bird flies against a yellow sky, colored steps lead to a path and a barren landscape with blue sky filled with pink and white undulating clouds.

In “Not Waving” the narrative has been reduced as well as the overall visual elements. An oval thought bubble floats above a self-portrait. Dark ink drips down over a pool of aqua. Hands emerge out of the watery abyss, while a white cloud with a bird on a branch drifts across it. The outlines of hands and their gestures tie the work to the body and back to the act of making. To the left of this oval are a group of

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mallard ducks floating in a sea of black inky water, perhaps suggesting the night, or something more sinister. Like all the work in this show, the edges of the paper have fabric borders referencing quilt binding, but at the top edge of "Not Waving," the artist has folded over askew a large portion of the fabric border, harkening back to a drape or blind used to shut or block the world out from a window.

Cowie's collaged paintings are in many ways autobiographical. Her work draws upon stories, events and people in her life, but the meaning is not exclusive to her alone. They describe both the physical and psychological spaces in which we reside, and are meant to be both comforting and disconcerting.

Claire Cowie received her BFA from the Washington University in St. Louis and her MFA from the University of Washington, Seattle. Cowie's work has been exhibited both nationally and internationally, including shows at the Henry Art Gallery (Seattle, WA), Takeda Biennial (Oaxaca, Mexico), Tacoma Art Museum (Tacoma, WA), Frye Art Museum (Seattle, WA), Shenzhen Fine Art Institute (Shenzhen, China) and The Art Gym at Marylhurst University (Marylhurst, OR). Her work is included in the collections of the Henry Art Gallery (Seattle, WA), Microsoft Corporation (Redmond, WA), Safeco (Seattle, WA) and Tacoma Art Museum (Tacoma, WA), among others. In 2017, Cowie completed a large installation for Facebook Artist in Residence (Seattle, WA).