JAMES HARRIS GALLERY
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PRESS RELEASE



Fay Jones "By Chance"
November 7 to December 18, 2026
Gallery Hours: Thu to Sat 12:00-5:00PM
and by appointment
Reception: Sat. Nov 7th, 4-6PM

Fay Jones
"Ghost Resort" 2026
Acrylic on Okawara paper
Overall: 78" x 83 1/2"

James Harris Gallery is pleased to present *By Chance*, a solo exhibition of paintings on paper by Fay Jones, organized in celebration of the artist's 90th year. Drawing upon family, friends, and lived experience, Jones has developed a personal iconography through which the familiar becomes psychologically charged. Her works examine the porous boundary between private moments and public experience, exploring both the impulse to conceal personal expression and the vulnerability of allowing others into one's world. Her scenes are pensive, shaped as much by what remains hidden as by what is revealed. Figures, animals, and insects appear suspended within enigmatic encounters, their relationships suggested through gestures, glances, and spatial proximity. A current of apprehension runs through these narratives, complicating their moments of humor and visual play.

Jones frequently stages her figures against flat planes of color that establish horizon lines and create a stylized illusion of depth. These color fields are not simply backdrops; they shift the relationship between figure and ground, directing the action while introducing spatial and emotional uncertainty. This flattening creates tension between the apparent simplicity of Jones's figures and the situations in which they appear. Throughout the work, an undertone of secrecy persists, with subtle visual cues pointing toward multiple—and sometimes contradictory—narrative outcomes.

Water and the seashore have long served as recurring sites for Jones's visual stories, and many of the works in the exhibition unfold along a beach or at the water's edge. These settings function as transitional spaces where solid ground meets the unknowable depths of the sea, mirroring the artist's interest in the boundary between conscious experience and the unconscious. Familiar imagery becomes unstable, and moments that might initially appear leisurely or serene carry an undercurrent of anxiety.

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Throughout the exhibition *By Chance*, Jones explores individual and collective responses to representation, nostalgia, and memory. Her paintings bring figures, animals, and recurring symbols into a psychological choreography that is playful, unsettling, and thought-provoking. Characters become signifiers for the submerged depths of the unconscious, while ordinary encounters open onto broader questions of intimacy, estrangement, and human connection. At once magical and troubling, Jones's intimate narratives reveal a world in which meaning is never fixed but continually shaped by memory, perception, and chance.

Fay Jones received a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1957. The artist has received numerous awards including a Joan Mitchell Painters and Sculptors grant in 2013, the Seattle Art Museum's 2006 Poncho Artist of the Year award, grants from the NEA in 1983 and 1990, the Washington State Arts Commission in 1984, and La Napoli Art Foundation in 1989. Last year a major diptych was acquired by the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts in Little Rock. Her work is included in the collections of the Portland Art Museum and the Hallie Ford Museum of Art in Oregon, and the Seattle Art Museum and the Tacoma Art Museum in Washington, among others.