

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

William Leavitt

Telemetry

April 21 – May 21, 2016
Ground Floor

Greene Naftali is pleased to announce *Telemetry*, the gallery's second solo exhibition by Los Angeles-based artist William Leavitt. Leavitt is part of a generation of Los Angeles artists integral to the development of Conceptual art in the 1960s and early 70s. Drawing on the fictions and fantasies that power Los Angeles' chief industry, as well as its singular architectural landscape, Leavitt's distinctive body of work consists of distilled filmic moments that are familiar, yet estranged. In the artist's mode of set-like installation, signifiers of the Southern California lifestyle float untethered to their original contexts, plucked from both the real built environment and its copy reproduced on studio sound stages. Leavitt, also a playwright, creates theatrical scenes in which set elements motivate characters and permeate dialogue, but here are instead activated by the peculiarity and pregnancy of their silence.

For this exhibition, Leavitt presents three recent theatrical environments, and a suite of paintings and works on paper dating from 1991 to 2016. The installations on view extend the modernist, aspirational aesthetic the artist has often employed to its futuristic conclusion: in *Arctic Earth* (2013), French doors open surreally to a hazy view of the earth from space, the trappings of a backyard barbeque appear amongst a tangle of percolating test tubes and siphons in *The small laboratory* (2015), and *The telemetry set* (2016) makes plain its own artifice, providing an explicit reference to sets within the entertainment industry. In the latter work, two chairs, signaling a talk show, are buried within multiple faux bamboo pillars. At the rear of the set are two screens upon streams of juxtaposing footage are projected—a roving blimp; cars halted in traffic behind a blinking police car; a silhouette of a woman's head, slowly looking side to side; the whirring of a ceiling fan; the flickering of an arcade game.

The exhibition's two-dimensional works frequently collide suburbia and sci-fi, furthering Leavitt's project of estranging the commonplace. Pedestrian objects coincide with visionary architecture, and suburban settings are ruptured by totemic architectural structures. In *Water Pump, Mu, and Parabola Signs* (1992), the silhouettes of unusually biomorphic billboards punctuate an otherwise familiar sunset. In *Landscape with 4 Objects* (1991), familiar items and elusive shapes are lined up, strangely prominent within a forest's horizon. Works such as *Living Room* and *Kitchen Island #1* and *#2* (all 2015) recall the pages of interior design magazines, yet the settings seem ripe for an event. Throughout the exhibition, Leavitt plays with expectations, constantly recalibrating the occurrence of the bizarre within the everyday.

William Leavitt's works are in the permanent collections of the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; and the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, among others. Leavitt lives and works in Los Angeles.

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