

Whitney McVeigh | CONTOURS

HAZARD Gallery

4th August – 4th September 2016

HAZARD Gallery is delighted to present **Contours** by London-based American artist, Whitney McVeigh. The first solo show at HAZARD's new gallery space at The Cosmopolitan, this constitutes eight ink on paper works and film 'Birth': Origins at the end of life recording six women's experiences of birth and existence at the location of St Christopher's, London.

McVeigh's symbolic language stems from a nomadic approach to travel and making. She collects, marks or draws, suggesting ownership yet emphasises, transforms and makes maps to the unknown. Her work reveals a dialogue between abstraction and oblique references to spirituality and the tangible world. While there is a pictorial sympathy with Asian brush painting in her ink paintings, McVeigh's cultural roots are embedded in western philosophy and art history. She has absorbed a rich mixture of influences, from the "Prodigal Son" drawings of Daumier through to André Breton's 1920's experiments in automatic writing, the haunting intimacies of Joseph Cornell's boxes and the ambiguous abstractions (and writings) of Robert Motherwell. Her work is also marked by literary references shaped by immersion in the work of artists' texts and world literature, particularly the poetry of Emily Dickinson, Jorge Luis Borges and Walt Whitman, all of whom have gradually infused her aesthetic personality. Her study of Jung and the subconscious is also present in the work.

McVeigh's film looks at universal and fundamental themes of birth and death and emphasises the importance of oral histories within communities to uncover wider truths. The film examines birth within the context of ageing and palliative care and challenges society's often darker associations linked to dying.

In 2010-11 McVeigh worked at David Krut Projects in Johannesburg and at the Nirox Foundation in the Cradle of Human Kind where she produced Archaeology of Memory, a series of paintings exhibited at SMAC Gallery in 2011. **Contours** marks the return of the artist to South Africa and the Nirox Foundation to extend and develop work in the land. Not Even Time is made with grass as a method of painting enabling direct contact with land and materials. **Contours** evokes unseen landscapes; borders and territories that exist in the body, archaic, organic forms and existential pathways emerging from the material itself.

As the critic Sean O'Toole said of McVeigh's previous South Africa paintings, her work "speaks of an acute state of being, one that allows the artist to find poise and equilibrium during her intuitive search for an image"

Whitney McVeigh is Fellow in Creative Practice at University of the Arts, London College of Fashion. She was born in New York in 1968 and lives and works in London. Recent solo exhibitions include Language of Memory at Summerhall in Edinburgh (2015-16), New Ink Paintings at Michael Goedhuis, London (2015) and Inventory: Invisible Companion at Kettle's Yard, Cambridge (2015). Group exhibitions include Paradoxal Stranger, Gallery MOMO, Cape Town (2016), Light Switch for Extinction Marathon at the Serpentine Gallery, London (2014) and Glass Stress, White Light/White Heat at the 55th Venice Biennale (2013) She has lectured and held discussions internationally including screening of her film at Royal Academy of Arts, London (2015) and presentation of her work at Louise Bourgeois' Salon in New York (2007).

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