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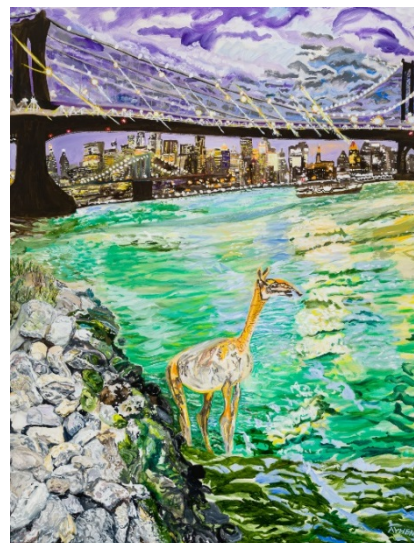
**Olive Ayhens: Urbanites and Ur-Beasts**

October 30 – December 20, 2019

Reception: Wednesday, October 30<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 – 8:00 pm

Bookstein Projects is pleased to announce an exhibition of new paintings and works on paper by Olive Ayhens. This is the artist's fourth show with Lori Bookstein and the second at Bookstein Projects.

Continuing her preoccupation with climate change, Ayhens has turned her attention backward as she looks forward. Imagining a world that used to be as she struggles to understand what our world will be, the artist has painted fantastical scenes that include extinct mammals and beasts juxtaposed against modern – even post-apocalyptic – cityscapes. In one such painting entitled *Camelid in the City*, a prehistoric camelid (an ancestor of the modern-day camel and llama) is shown grazing along the shore of the East River. First appearing on North America some 20 million years ago, this long-necked camelid lived during the Miocene epoch and went extinct 4.9 million years ago. The notion of these prehistoric creatures appearing in contemporary cityscapes are what the artist describes as both “humorous and absurd.” Absurdity aside, Ayhens is also able to convey the essence of the urban landscape. The East River, painted in brilliant emeralds and chartreuses, captures the electric-energy of city lights reflecting on the surface of the water.



Olive Ayhens, *Camelid in the City*, 2019, Oil on linen, 52 x 39 inches. (BP#OA-8358)

In *Dumbo Dreams*, the artist continues to push the illogical - boats and freighters are seen passing in and out of the anchors of the Manhattan Bridge. It is a scene that recalls fantasies of New York-turned-Venice and the inevitabilities of climate change. This thread continues in works like *Downstairs Deluge*. In what at first seems like a scene of serene city-life reveals itself to be a warning against rising oceans. A seductive mosaic of glass windows distracts the viewer from the water and trees that fill the bottom floors of the building – an allusion to the pervasive tension between nature and civilization found throughout the artist's oeuvre.

This exhibition will be accompanied by a fully-illustrated catalog with an essay by Susan N. Platt, PhD.

Olive Ayhens (b. Oakland, CA) received her BFA and MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute. In addition to her extensive exhibition history, Ayhens has been the recipient of numerous awards and grants including the Joan Mitchell Grant, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Award and Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation Individual Support Grant. Artist residencies include The Walsh Sharpe Art Foundation Space Program, MacDowell Colony, Fundacion Valparaiso, the Salzburg Kunsterhaus, Yaddo Artist Residency, Djerassi Artist Residency, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, the Roswell Artist Residency, the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council and a residency at the Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program in 2017. The artist lives and works in New York City.

*Olive Ayhens: Urbanites and Ur-Beasts* will be on view from October 30 – December 20, 2019. An opening reception will be held on Wednesday, October 30<sup>th</sup> from 6:00-8:00pm. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 11:00 am to 6:00 pm. The gallery will be closed for the Thanksgiving holiday from Tuesday, November 26 – Saturday, November 30, 2019. For additional information and/or visual materials, please contact the gallery at (212) 750-0949 or by email at info@booksteinprojects.com.