

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Social Abstraction

Angelo Filomeno, Won Ju Lim, Aili Schmeltz,
David Simpson, Robert Stone, Lena Wolff

September 10 - October 29, 2022

Opening Reception: Saturday, September 10, 3:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Haines Gallery proudly presents ***Social Abstraction***, a group exhibition showcasing works by **Angelo Filomeno, Won Ju Lim, Aili Schmeltz, David Simpson, Robert Stone** and **Lena Wolff**. Working in a diverse selection of media and practices, these six artists demonstrate the potential for line, color and form to address both real-world concerns—political truths, environmental degradation and conservation, affordable housing—and matters of the mind and spirit.

Lena Wolff's (b. 1972, lives and works in Berkeley, CA) interdisciplinary practice merges craft traditions with geometric abstraction, feminist, and political art. Drawing from American quilt iconography—a medium steeped in history and political potential—her work investigates the transformative power of shape and symbol. *Social Abstraction* features one of the artist's signature, hand-cut paper collages, as well as delicate line drawings and wall-hung wood sculptures. Geometrically-derived quilting patterns, passed down and shared for generations (the eight-pointed star, the kaleidoscope) are combined with natural and cosmic imagery, as well as the artist's own symbols for democracy, equality, and justice—an index of a shared visual language and a vision of a more just future.

Aili Schmeltz's (b. 1975, lives and works in Los Angeles and Joshua Tree, CA) textile paintings chart a feminist history of the American West. She embroiders ridged, undulating patterns onto pieces of dyed canvas that are stitched together, evoking natural elements found in the desert landscape, and names each for a notable California woman, such as labor organizer Dolores Huerta and climate and racial justice activist Aniya Butler. These works are shown in dialogue with new ceramic pieces, which borrow from the visual motifs and utopian impulses of Art Deco and Modernist design, continuing Schmeltz's investigation into the philosophical underpinnings of our everyday surroundings.

Won Ju Lim (b. 1968, lives and works in Los Angeles, CA) invites audiences to reconsider the built environment and its relation to memory, fantasy, and longing. With a sly nod to Donald Judd, her wall-hung sculpture *Kiss 11* (2015) produces a cascade of colorful shadows when light passes through it. Within the piece are architectural models



Lena Wolff, *Full Moon Star*, 2021
Walnut, beech, maple
42 x 42 x 2 inches



Aili Schmeltz, *Butler*, 2022
Acrylic and thread on canvas over panel
18 x 24 inches

based on plans of the famed Case Study Houses. Built in the Los Angeles area between 1948 and 1966, these quintessential examples of mid-century modernism were affordable homes meant to address the postwar housing shortage. Immaterial and intangible, the sculpture's projected interior becomes a reference point for an architecture of the ideal.

Angelo Filomeno (b. 1963, lives and works in New York, NY) often chooses subjects from the natural world, exploring how the beauty he finds there shepherds us between the material and spiritual planes. The artist's signature works, created from intricate embroidery on textile, demonstrate his technical and aesthetic skill in merging aspects of painting, needlework, and craft. Filomeno's precisely stitched scenes first caught the world's attention at the 52nd Venice Biennale; since then, he has continued to receive critical acclaim for highly symbolic artworks that incorporate a variety of fabrics and materials—including denim, shantung silk, metallic thread, and gemstones—to create pieces that are both alluring and provocative

Robert Stone's (b. 1961, lives and works in San Francisco, CA) striking canvases mine the tension between clarity of line and ambiguity in meaning. In his layered compositions, intersecting planes of blacks, whites, and grays create sculptural surfaces and tactile geometries that at once recall raised pyramids, geologic formations, and arched passageways that open onto enigmatic environments. Ridged, glistening passages of thickly applied acrylic paint give way to poured resin and bare linen canvas, an interplay of depth and dimensionality that changes as viewers interact with the work. Stone's painting emphasizes the ambiguous, a reflection of the painting as a subjective experience.

David Simpson's (b. 1928, lives and works in Berkeley, CA) paintings weave together impulses of minimalism and hard-edge abstraction with those of the California Light and Space movement. In *Imperative of the Ideal* (1989), part of the artist's circular "Tondo" series, Simpson pairs a metallic silver with a rich indigo to produce a work in which one half appears to have remarkable depth, while the other seems to radiate with internal light. The resulting experience is an introspective exploration of balance and harmony, accomplished through this striking contrast. The work immediately becomes the still center of whatever space it occupies. "It may be old-fashioned to say that art should be redemptive, Simpson has remarked, "but I believe it should be when it can."

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Won Ju Lim, *Kiss 11*, 2015
Plexiglas, light
7.25 x 24 x 17 inches



Robert Stone, *Untitled*, 2021
Acrylic and mixed media on linen-wrapped panel
36 x 36 inches