

# LOIS LAMBERT GALLERY

at Bergamot Station  
2525 Michigan Ave E3  
Santa Monica, CA 90404

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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"Tidal Impact"  
Graphite on paper and  
duralar  
15" x 22"



"Gold Mine"  
Graphite and glass beads on  
paper and duralar,  
43" x 79"

# Arminée Chahbazian

## Displacement

September 8th, 2018 – November 3rd, 2018

Opening reception Saturday, September 8th, 6-9pm

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SANTA MONICA, CA – Lois Lambert Gallery presents "Displacement", new work by painter and sculptor Arminée Chahbazian. In these drawings, life forms and nature's trappings are set against vast and monumental locations. The artist cites the importance of the contrast between the micro - scale of her organisms and subjects and the macro - scale of their settings. However, the existence of the locations and the animals or objects in these works is fraught with more than just the tension of their contrasting scales.

In reality, these pictures depend on disruption. This is a gentle disruption that begs for contemplative consideration. The soft graphite renderings and the buttery layers of duralar give these works a sense of quiet that is then jarringly interrupted. In some works, her subjects penetrate the layers of the duralar, floating under and over the landscape. Like scale, perspective is manipulated to achieve the disarming and dreamlike effect.

Compositionally, these works perform Surrealist poetry, where jellyfish tentacles echo and rhyme with a crashing waterfall. A sea urchin floats in harmony with a waning moon, and a honeycomb mirrors the cracks in a parched earth.

There is a tempo and volume to her work that quietly demands pause, softly insists upon contemplation. The artist considers her verdant Northern Californian location as crucial to her practice. Chahbazian's titles such as "Tidal Impact" suggest the impending doom of our environment. Chahbazian is deeply concerned with the state of our world and its inhabitants. However, these works are not just cautionary environmentalism, showing life forms under siege from pollution or deforestation. This is not just about nature, it's about the very nature of these beings. They are not supposed to be where they are, and it's unclear how they came to be there. They are not invasive, if anything, we get a sense of alarm - something has occurred that has caused them to be removed from what might be their normal residence and has now floated them in a place that is still natural, but unnatural to them. Her subjects' existence is defined not by their place in the setting, nor are her settings by their role as such, but by the disruptive element.

And while the essence of these subjects has not changed, (the frog is still a frog) we consider these subjects differently as a result.



"Be Gone"  
Graphite and gold leaf on  
paper and duralar  
40" x 54"

The jellyfish, sea urchin, ants, and other subjects that have been displaced act as points of entry for the viewer. They elicit a sympathetic existential angst in the viewer - these beings are mired in the absurdity of their existence. The environments that Chahbazian has placed her subjects in are just dissimilar enough to be completely untenable. In fact, the only reason these subjects have for being (within their art - bound existence) is to float ambiguously, to convey meaning through their lack of context. These works are existentially rife, but certainly not meaningless.

The work may have dire weighty themes, but is still displays aesthetic considerations. These works are colorless, but emotionally charged. In some works, Chahbazian uses tiny hand-beading. The glass beads act not as a decorative touch, but as punctuation, drawing attention to the literal threads that tie these layers of meaning together.

Arminee is insistent that this is not despairing work. She views displacement as having the possibility for hope - the possibility for new beginnings. In our current climate, the decision to hope remains our greatest asset, and what defines us as agents of volition.



"Evaporation"  
Graphite and fire ash on  
paper and duralar  
15" x 22"

Arminee Chahbazian studied at Skowhegen, received her BA from Scripps, and her MFA from Yale University. She has been awarded residencies at Artpolis in Provence, France, the Ucross Foundation, in Wyoming. She has shown and is in numerous collections in the US and Europe.