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Kirsten Everberg

April 22 – June 3 2017

Exploring the complex relationships between culture, history and place, Kirsten Everberg applies the framework of distinct ethnic neighborhoods in Los Angeles to create a new body of work, using the concept of Chinatown as a jumping off point.

Chinatown, in the heart of Los Angeles, evokes the film *Chinatown*, and the water issues of Los Angeles that run parallel to the current drought ravaging California, while also referencing the many historical layers of culture, economy and politics inherent in the Chinatowns around the world as immigrants are contained in a uniquely segregated section of the city.

Los Angeles' original 1860s Chinatown, built to house Chinese railroad laborers, was razed to make space for the 1930s Union Station, and 'New Chinatown' was built using left-over stereotypical set pieces from the Hollywood film *The Good Earth*, setting the stage for a tourist industry. The need for a cultural center, community support, entertainment and places of worship complicates the relationship between location and its inhabitants in a simultaneous drive to separate and isolate. At the same time, the residents and laborers were prohibited from owning property or becoming citizens by America's first anti-immigrant law, the Chinese Exclusion Act. Fragmented motifs continue to both support the communities identity and perpetuate its layered and complex history.

The paintings defy any singular perspective, but instead move in and out of recognizable spaces. Each painting contains a structural base of Los Angeles' Chinatown from which elements and architecture of many Chinatowns are added, collaged and conflated. Everberg pushes the boundaries that separate representation and abstraction in this new body of work, as she continues to explore the construction of spaces that we experience. Explosive color both grounds and disorients the viewer as the eye moves across her work. The paint moves both compositionally and literally as a result of Everberg's process. The glossy and viscous paint is poured, pushed and thinned as she physically builds up her paint, piecing together imagery from multiple locations, pointing to both the vastness of cultural isolation and how this is experienced locally, contemporarily by the Los Angeles-based painter. Within any one frame, multiple geographic, social and political elements come together to create a visually arresting space.