



"CAULDRON 12," 2016, Katherine Tzu-Lan Mann
ACRYLIC, SUMI INK, SILKSREEN ON PAPER
62" X 65" PHOTO: COURTESY LAURA KORMAN GALLERY

see it, which is kind of perfect for an artist interested in immersive, experiential works. Three geometrical, open sculptural spaces, parts of which are mirrored, seem to change their shapes with the currents and daylight hours. It's durational and fractal and the viewer finds their own way in—just the way Aitken likes it. In the end, it is a testament to the effectiveness of the overall show that it created a context where such a crazy idea could make such perfect sense.

—SHANA NYS DAMBROT

LOS ANGELES

Katherine Tzu-Lan Mann: "Alloy" at Laura Korman Gallery

In conceiving her recent complex, layered, vibrant multi-media works, DC-based artist Katherine Tzu-Lan Mann might have embarked from the enticingly oxymoronic premise expressed by 20th-century painter Francis Bacon, "I believe in deeply ordered chaos." Working on paper placed on the floor of her studio, Mann begins each piece by pouring diluted acrylic paint, ink and water on the surface, allowing shapes to form and coalesce in a dynamic organic interplay. The resulting somewhat improvised foundations for composition—swirling with energy captured in the poured pigments, and popping with color—become the background upon which the artist builds.

As points of departure, the backgrounds offer clues to where she might take them. Many of the pieces are based on a sort of circular form evoking a floral motif. Creating order from the chaos, Mann works inward, superimposing intricate detail, such as ribbon-like vines and the delicate veins of leaves. She pulls from a surprisingly diverse range of media and techniques—woodcut, etching, silkscreen and collage—to add overall visual resonance to the work. In one of the most intricate pieces, *Woven* (2016), the artist cut thick strips of paper on which she had

"LANDSCAPE FOR CANDACE," 2015

Chris Engman

PIGMENT PRINT, 43" X 55 1/2"

PHOTO: COURTESY LUIS DE JESUS

already applied the background paint, manipulating the surface by weaving it, adding another element of pattern and texture.

Evoking close-up abstracted landscape, the series was inspired by Mann's 2016 visit to the ancient Mogao Caves on the Dunhuang oasis in Northern China's Gobi Desert. Situated on the Silk Road, the caves are the site of 492 hand-carved Buddhist temples. Dating from the 4th to 14th century, the cave walls are richly painted, often floor-to-ceiling, with images of the Buddha engaged in narrative depictions of his life. (Interestingly, replica cave interiors were featured last summer in the Getty Center exhibit, "Cave Temples of Dunhuang.") The immersive nature of the Buddhist imagery, with its combined figurative, abstract and decorative patterns, made a profound impression on the artist. By whatever degree she channeled that experience as a leaping-off point for this body of work, the end product might be thought of as a symbolic synthesis of Mann's worldview. Born in Wisconsin, the artist lived in Israel, China, Taiwan and South Korea while growing up. An amalgam of bold color and energy controlled with dexterity, the artist's approach suggests a determination to impose a sense of harmony upon a wild multi-faceted vision.

—MEGAN ABRAHAMSON

LOS ANGELES

Chris Engman: "Prospect and Refuge" at Luis De Jesus Los Angeles

Chris Engman's haunting photographs present the viewer with a conundrum: either the artist has created his effects through nifty digital sleight of hand, or he must have gone to extraordinary effort to craft his uncanny overlays in three dimensions, then used his camera to document them. The fact that it's the latter (with a hint of digital finessing) only

attests to the artist's commitment to his vision, and the lengths he is willing to travel to pursue his investigation into the nature of photography, illusion, and the construction of pictorial space. At once disorienting and precise, his interior/exterior landscapes blend a surrealist's sense of mischief with an anthropologist's rigor and the curiosity of a philosopher. Visually immersive, they're also flat out amazing.

Titled "Prospect and Refuge," the show draws inspiration from the theories of British writer Jay Appleton, who posits that two of humanity's most basic needs are for opportunity and shelter. Engman uses this dichotomy as a central element in his images, along with a dialogue between nature and architecture, between organic and geometric form. In some works, he brings the inside outside, constructing fragmentary hints of shelter in the midst of a field or wilderness. In the show's most striking works, Engman brings the outside inside, recreating photographs he shot outdoors, assembling them as elaborate two-dimensional constructions in various interior spaces, along the walls and floors and ceilings, which snap into proper perspective when shot from a single, preset viewpoint. At first glance, these overlays seem almost seamless; but the artist always leaves numerous hints in his images attesting their artificiality.

In *Containment* (2015), Engman reconstructs a canyon in Zion National Park in Utah, from a set of photos taken during a hike through the narrows carved out by the Virgin River. The diagonal lines of fluorescent lights above and a small square window to the right are the biggest clues that what appears to be the flow of a river through the looming walls of canyon is in fact a recreation, built on more

