

Anthropologist and Visual Artist Susan Ossman's Solo Exhibition "In the Wash" Fuses Painting With Ethnography

Ossman's training in both fields enables her to create work that merges disciplines, giving us an insightful and astute perspective of work, time and value.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- [Susan Ossman's](#) solo exhibition "In the Wash" showing April 9 to May 13, 2022 at [Gallery 825](#) in Los Angeles looks at human relationships with the natural world, the process of art making and how capitalism informs innovation and artistic creation. A reception is scheduled for April 9, 2022 from 10 AM to 5PM at Gallery 825.



Winter Wash, Oil on Canvas, 4 panels, 96" x 72"

The three large paintings that make up "In the Wash" depict laundry drying in the open air.

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I am an anthropologist, an artist, a serial migrant: I create spaces for research across sites, media, and scholarly and artistic worlds.”

Susan Ossman

Together they invite reflection on fading practices that associate the invisible forces of the wind with the unseen labor of women and the work of the artist.

The images in the paintings are composed across multiple canvases, creating a flickering viewing experience that moves from the painting as a whole to the edges of each section. There is the suggestion of further layers of laundry pinned to a line and the regular and relentless work of the women at the washboard.

The use of stretched canvas and oil paint pays homage to time-honored traditions in painting

while the progression of application means, method, and gesture guides the viewer through time-- inviting questions about the status and place of art and artists.

In the first painting, "Christo's Laundry" classical oil painting techniques evoke the gentle movement of cloth on a still spring day. More visible brush strokes shape the wind-twisted sheets of "Winter Wash" in a modernist style. "Caught in the Sheets" turns laundry into an exuberant field of summer color. The palettes of each work also differ markedly, further playing on the varied artistic references created in exhibiting the paintings together.

The variety within the works leads to many important questions such as: does individualized style define an artist or is it a brand for art market purposes? Is that style a signature unique to the artist? Does the art absorb the artist behind or within the work? Does the identity and experiences of the artist complete the work?

The three paintings in the exhibition were produced in the context of art/anthropological research on laundry lines. Along with other artworks, they instigated a series of collaborative art-making that brought visual and performing artists and scholars together for a series of exhibition/performances in a gallery, a mall, public libraries, parks and open fields from 2013-16. Ossman writes about the project in her book *Shifting Worlds, Shaping Fields, A Memoir of Anthropology and Art* (Routledge 2021).

Susan Ossman is an artist, anthropologist and writer. She studied art and history at UC Berkeley. An interest in colonialism and notions of the avant-garde led her to Paris and on to Morocco where she studied the relationship between media images and politics, then made beauty salons in Casablanca, Paris and Cairo sites for exploring globalization. In the 2000's she began traveling the world to listen to the stories of people who had lived in multiple countries, leading to the creation of The Moving Matters Travelling Workshop, a global collective that develops on-site programs on migration internationally. She came to Southern California in 2007 to teach anthropology and global studies at the University of California, Riverside.



Christo's Laundry, Oil on Canvas, 3 panels, 108" x 60"



Ossman's art has been exhibited and performed in the USA, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Romania, Spain, England and Tunisia.

Current projects include a study of ecology, addiction and the human condition that focuses on the poppy flower, and "Scattered Subjects", which explores notions of "the subject" in art, literature and social thought in the context of the COVID 19 pandemic by mingling on-site and digital media.

susanossman.com

Gallery 825 is the exhibition arm of the [Los Angeles Art Association](#). Purchased in 1958, the gallery, which is located in the heart of Los Angeles at 825 North La Cienega Boulevard and provides LAAA artists with a professional venue in which to show their work

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