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press release

**Olivia Parkes***The Way Home*

October 26 – December 21, 2024

events Vernissage: Friday, October 25, 6–9 pm

exhibition Mountains is pleased to present *The Way Home*, Olivia Parkes's second solo exhibition with the gallery.

Drawing from both historical representations and personal history, the paintings in *The Way Home* investigate dwelling and disaster. They present the physical and psychic shelters we seek from the encroachments of time. The works are full of unfit dwellings as well as timekeepers: moons, clocks, candles. The spaces they present are contradictory or impossible to enter, recalling by turns a doll's house or stage set.

A suite of four central paintings draws on illustrations of astronomical portents and natural catastrophes depicted in the sixteenth century Augsburg Book of Miracles: a dam breaks, a pink moon rises, birds fall from the sky. The images elicit our search for meaning in disaster, as well as both the hope and fear of a cosmic intervention in the earthly.

The works are displayed alongside a tableaux of miniature objects from the artist's own collection reaching back to childhood. These include bones, worry dolls, a toy car unearthed in the yard of the artist's former home in the Southern California desert. Such objects have been kept, but have lost what they themselves belonged to.

A recurring motif is that of the moon. It refers to a haiku allegedly written by a Zen monk after returning to his simple hut and finding it robbed of his few possessions:

The moon at the window  
The thief left it at home.

If Parkes's paintings show us shelters that succumb or spaces we cannot enter, they also insist on the coexistence of inside and out, heaven and earth, the celestial and the domestic. The places we leave behind may not be returned to, but neither can the world leave us. If these are paintings about what cannot be kept, they are also about what cannot be stolen.

The exhibition is accompanied by two texts, by the artist herself and the novelist Rita Bullwinkel, and brings Parkes's paintings together with her work as a fiction writer for the first time.

## biographies

**Olivia Parkes** (b. 1989 London) is a British-American artist and writer. Recent exhibitions and performances include Canepa Neri, Milan (2023); Mountains, Berlin (2022); Kunstquartier Bethanien, Berlin (2021); Dorothea Konwiarz Stiftung, Berlin (2020); Gussglashalle Berlin, curated by Kunsthalleperleberg (2019); Hannah Barry Gallery, London (2019); Stadium, Berlin (2017), and Berlin Masters (2016). She is the recipient of fellowships from the Elizabeth George Foundation, the Dorothea Konwiarz Stiftung, and the Senatsverwaltung für Kultur und Europa, Berlin. Her short fiction has appeared in *Tin House*, *Electric Literature*, *American Short Fiction*, *Zyzyva*, and *The Baffler*, among other publications. In 2023 she was a resident in the Writer's Room at Callie's, Berlin. Work by the artist is held in numerous collections in Europe and the US.

**Rita Bullwinkel** (b. 1989 San Francisco) is the author of *Headshot*, which was longlisted for the Booker Prize and shortlisted for the Center for Fiction First Novel Prize. Her first book, *Belly Up*, won the Believer Book Award. She is a 2022 recipient of a Whiting Award and the editor of *McSweeney's Quarterly*. As the Picador Guest Professor of Literature at Leipzig University, she taught courses on creative writing, zines, and the use of invented and foreign languages as tools for world building. *Headshot* has been translated into German (*Schlaglicht*) and published by Aufbau Verlag.

## social media

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## press

For a press preview of the exhibition as well as press material please contact the gallery.

## contact

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