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LUCY WILLIAMS

MOSAIC

May 20 – July 3, 2021

Berggruen Gallery is pleased to present *Lucy Williams: MOSAIC*, an exhibition of recent mixed media bas-relief collages by British artist Lucy Williams. This show marks Williams's second solo exhibition with the gallery and will be on view May 20 through July 3, 2021.

Lucy Williams explores the graphic concerns of shape, color, and repetition through an architectural lens in her most recent collages. From renderings of Bauhaus era Modernist interiors to playful interpretations of 19th century Welsh quilt patterns, *MOSAIC* presents intricate works both representational and abstract. Employing a meticulous practice that reinterprets the very medium of collage, Williams builds her work in ascending layers of varying materials. Paper, Plexiglas, wood veneer, fabric, piano wire, and thread are just a few of the components Williams manipulates to structure her architectural geometries. The artist writes, “the illusion that I aim to achieve is an image that is simultaneously industrial and tactile.” The stark subject matter is depicted using hobbyist materials; its initial coolness gives way to an intricate warmth of detail.

MOSAIC explores the geometries of public and private swimming pools—from community Olympic-size municipal pools in Germany to luxurious private pools in Palm Springs. The element of reflection in the water inevitably distorts the perception of built architectural form. *Blue Tiles* (2021), *Indoor Pool (with mural)* (2021), and *Reflecting Pool (red mosaic)* (2019) are representational depictions of the German swimming complexes of Schwimmhalle Finckensteinallee, Südbad Dortmund, and Hallenbad Brackel, respectively. At each of these sites, and in Williams's corresponding works, intricate tile patterned mosaics and elaborate geometric murals cover the walls. The pools reflect the walls back on themselves, doubling up their forms and colors from an altered angle of perspective. Through a layered use of paper, paint, and Plexiglas, Williams also depicts the geometry of the tiles below the water. This latticework of collaged depth and surface describes an image that is entirely believable and yet surprisingly abstract, as the two properties are combined. Other architectures—a library or an entire apartment block—are included in the exhibition as earlier points of contrast to Williams's pool imagery, though these too rely on repeated shapes of color to construct their subject matter. Altogether, the artist's works stand as relics of these past places, as the real structures that have inspired Williams have often been demolished, redesigned, or drastically modified. Moreover, the artist's own unique practice of laborious, three-dimensional collage infuses the austere scenes with newfound humanity.

In addition to Williams's mid-20th century architectural renderings, *MOSAIC* also debuts the artist's first-ever purely abstract works, the *Threaded Collages*. These intimate-scale works are at once simple and complex. Williams utilizes triangular and diamond forms in repetition, both in colorful painted papers and the exposed panel where such papers are absent, to create dynamic designs. Adding contrast of fibrous line to the flat planes of paper and panel, the forms are then joined and elaborated with parallel stitches of silk and cotton threads. Williams notes, “my interest in repetition of graphic shapes in the representational works—the tiled pool floor, the mosaiced wall, the blocks of color and texture—is magnified in the threaded

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collages.” Rather than a wholly separate body of work, these collages exist as an extension of Williams practice. She originally conceived the inspiration for her abstract works upon exploring Bauhaus tapestries, such as those made by Gunta Stölzl and Benita Koch-Otte. This research led her to come across a quilt sample made in Otti Berger’s weaving workshop. Williams became enamored by the piece and soon transformed an experimental painted collage into a woven one. Considering her Welsh ancestry, Williams went on to explore 19th century Welsh quilting. She found these textiles reflected the distinct, bold graphics of her own makings. Soon, her abstract works took on a more playful and personal quality that resonated with the process of transformation occurring throughout the rest of her practice.

Lucy Williams was born in Oxford, England in 1972. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Fine Art from Glasgow School of Art in 1996 and her Postgraduate Diploma in Fine Art from Royal Academy Schools in 2003. The artist has since exhibited her work internationally, with solo shows including *Pavilion* at Timothy Taylor Gallery, London (2012), *Festival* at McKee Gallery, New York (2014) and *Lucy Williams: Pools* at Berggruen Gallery, San Francisco (2017). Williams’s work has also been represented in major group exhibitions, such as *Painting the Glass House: Artists Revisit Modern Architecture* at The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Connecticut (2008), *After* curated by Marjolaine Levy at Galerie Mitterand, Paris (2013), and *Cut & Paste | 400 Years of Collage*, National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh (2019). Williams currently lives and works in London.

Lucy Williams: MOSAIC, May 20 – July 3, 2021. On view at 10 Hawthorne Street, San Francisco, CA 94105. Images and preview are available upon request. For all inquiries, please contact the gallery by phone (415) 781-4629 or by email info@berggruen.com.