



RUIZ-HEALY ART

Contemporary Art from Latin America & Texas

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Gallery: 210-804-2219

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Constance Lowe: Air to Ground

The exhibition will be on display January 29 through February 28, 2015

RUIZ-HEALY ART 201-A East Olmos Drive, San Antonio Texas 78212

Opening Reception 6--8 pm Thursday, January 29, 2015

Valentine's with the Artist, 12 – 3pm Saturday, February 14, 2015

Catalogue available with Essay by Alison Hearst

Ruiz-Healy Art is pleased to announce a solo exhibition of new works by Constance Lowe. *Air to Ground* opens Thursday, January 29th with an artist reception, 6--8 pm. Lowe will also be in attendance for a Valentine social on Saturday, February 14 from 12 –3 pm.

Constance (Connie) Lowe was born in St. Louis, Missouri, and lives and works in San Antonio. She received an MFA from Western Michigan University and a BFA from Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas. Her current mixed media works combine influences of her Midwestern farming heritage, landsat photography, and the legacy of geometric abstract painting with the physical presence of materials such as felt and leather. By chiefly using the visual language of non-representation, her collages and paintings all demonstrate how our natural environment and our relationship to it is increasingly abstract.

Constance Lowe's exhibition, *Air to Ground*, consists of highly textural geometric collages that are brilliantly colored and either set against semi-translucent drafting film or presented as shaped panel paintings. A single work's composition often incorporates wool felt, photographs of clouds, peculiarly dyed commercial leathers, and muted passages of acrylic paint and colored pencil. Each collage in the series stands apart from the other in palette, arrangement, and scale, yet they have a kinship in that they all juxtapose traditional and unconventional artistic materials, and share visual and thematic threads.

These works are all part of Lowe's *Garden City* series, 2013 to the present, which, formally and conceptually, evolve from US geological landsat (NASA land satellite) photographs that depict the circle-and-grid-shaped center-pivot irrigation farming patterns that dot the Midwest's landscape. These aerial survey images often code the crop formations in unnatural hues in order to track the agricultural use of water throughout the years, and to document the continual changes to the earth's surface. These human and technological mediations are, in turn, echoed in Lowe's *Garden City*



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series, yet she pushes, displaces, and layers the flat forms found in the landsat imagery to further abstract the circular, unnatural shapes.

While Lowe is hesitant to outline the specific concepts in her work, her interest in the landsat maps reflects her lifelong exploration of various human efforts to understand and tame nature, either through science, psychology, photography, or socio-industry.¹ These concerns also elucidate the works' formal compositions and material characteristics, which are two facets of artmaking that are of utmost importance to Lowe. Through the use of exaggeratedly colored natural textiles derived from animal skins, cropped photographs of clouds taken by the artist, and common artist materials, the *Garden City* series explores the intersections of nature and artifice, and underscores how these divisions are becoming progressively ambiguous and, thus, abstracted.

While the *Garden City* works investigate, as the artist states, the “in-between-ness” amid abstraction/representation and nature/artifice, the title of the series neatly implicates these frictions on its own.¹ “Garden” and “city” are two contrasting words that evoke the natural and the urban, but both signal humanity’s impact within the world. A “garden,” for example, is made up of nature that has been tamed or fully fabricated through human involvement; while “city” implies a built-up urban center that largely consists of inorganic, manmade development. More specifically, Garden City is also a town in Kansas where Lowe’s family has roots, and was instrumental in introducing center pivot irrigation to the region. In a serendipitous event, the first geological survey irrigation image Lowe happened upon depicted Garden City, Kansas. “I am intrigued by the name Garden City,” as the artist explains, “because—in addition to my family connections to the town—I was interested in the tension heard in the name, as well as the tension between the name and the physical actuality of the windswept agricultural lands which are cultivated (like a garden I suppose) artificially and industrially through irrigation.”

Constance Lowe was selected for the ArtPace International artist in Residence Program in 1998, and received a San Antonio Artist Foundation award in 2007. Exhibitions of her work include the Southwest School of Art, San Antonio; ArtPace, San Antonio; Phoenix Art Museum; Trinity College, Hartford; Thomas Barry Fine Arts, Minneapolis; Forum for Contemporary Art, St. Louis; I-Space, Chicago; and Monash University, Caulfield, Australia. She is also a Professor of Art at the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Constance Lowe: Air to Ground will be on view through February 28, 2015.

Founded in 2004, and located in the historic Olmos Park District of San Antonio, Ruiz-Healy Art specializes in contemporary and modern art with an emphasis on Latin American and Texas connected artists. To request high-resolution images, or to arrange an interview with the artist, please contact the gallery at 210-804-2219.