

For Immediate Release
October 6, 2016

WELLIN MUSEUM OF ART TO PRESENT A MID-CAREER SURVEY OF WORK BY JULIA JACQUETTE IN 2017, FEATURING TWO SITE-SPECIFIC MURALS DESIGNED FOR THE EXHIBITION

**Exhibition Will Examine Two Bodies of Work by Jacquette:
A Decade of Oil Paintings that Explore our Relationship with the Media Landscape that Surrounds Us
and A New Graphic Memoir Based on the Architecture of Urban Playgrounds in the 1970s**



Julia Jacquette, *Playground of My Mind*, detail (2010-2015), gouache on paper, 18 x 13 1/2 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Clinton, NY – With the exhibition *Julia Jacquette: Unrequited and Acts of Play*, the Wellin Museum of Art at Hamilton College will present a mid-career survey of the artist’s paintings and her new graphic memoir, curated by Tracy L. Adler, Director, Wellin Museum of Art. The exhibition will be on view from February 18 through July 2, 2017, and an abridged version of the show will travel to the Visual Arts Center of New Jersey in Summit, NJ, where it will be on view from September 24, 2017 through January 14, 2018.

The first solo museum survey of Jacquette’s work in more than a decade, *Unrequited and Acts of Play* will include loans from U.S. and European collections, and many new pieces made for this exhibition that have never before been exhibited. Comprising two distinct but related bodies of Jacquette’s work, the exhibition includes paintings that explore the challenge of navigating one’s own identity and self-worth through the contemporary media landscape that surrounds us (the “Unrequited” in the title), and the nostalgia of 1970s playgrounds (the “Acts of Play” in the title). Jacquette’s oil paintings focus on her fascination with consumption, commodification, and the desires evoked and exploited by the advertising and luxury industries. Her profoundly personal graphic memoir comprised of gouache works on paper is titled *Playground of My Mind*, and is inspired by adventure playgrounds designed in New York and Amsterdam during the 1960s and 1970s. It will be copublished by Prestel and the Wellin Museum of Art in February 2017.

Explains Adler, “This exhibition explores how we internalize our response to the media, and offers us an opportunity to be critical and reflective about how this imagery impacts our happiness, our choices and our society. In an era in which we are constantly exposed to a barrage of commercialized visual imagery, we need to be

smart about the ways in which we contend with and contextualize it. Jacquette looks at identity through the lens of personal experience in the graphic memoir *Playground of My Mind* as well as through rapid-fire commercialism in her sumptuously painted canvases. This kind of exploration of doubt, of self and of who we are as a culture is not one that is mined enough. Jacquette gives us the opportunity to unpack the meaning of our past and who we are today by questioning our place within this broader context.”

Adds Jacquette, “In my work, I’m not simply being critical, I am readily admitting my own vulnerability to, and fascination with, the powerful, and all-invasive narrative of a mythical, perfect, and of course unattainable existence that is insidiously and constantly put forth to us through the media. My work is indebted to traditions of painting that utilize media images (pop art, and also the work of German “Capitalist Realist” artists Gerhard Richter and Sigmar Polke), but it’s different because it interprets the similar subject matter through the lens of feminism. My graphic memoir explores topics that have hardly been covered in books and scholarship; and it’s a new form and language for me (comics), chosen as the best way to describe and visually explain this segment of 1970s-era architecture and design.”

PAINTINGS AND MURALS

Through her oil paintings, Jacquette explores how the narrative of happiness through wealth and status is depicted in Postwar and contemporary media. Her subjects include prepared foods, glamorized women, opulent interiors of the rich, and water and liquors. Rendering these objects with photorealist precision—frequently in views so close that the subject becomes abstracted—Jacquette draws the viewer’s attention to the excess depicted by the commercial media and professes her own attraction and revulsion to these idealized materialistic trappings.

The paintings in the exhibition address several broad themes: “Water and Liquor”—including such works as *Water* (2010), *Rum, Lime* (2010) and *Cognac* (2011); “Luxury”—featuring *Yacht in Water* (2009) and *Pearl Necklace* (2010), among others; and “Period Imagery”—focusing on vintage illustrations from magazines and cookbooks, including a painting of prepared foods titled *A Constant Stream* (2014), and lipstick in *The Mouths of Four Gorgons* (2014).

Jacquette’s paintings critique the idealized lifestyles portrayed in the media, focusing on commercialized and fetishized objects of desire. Yet these material trappings are isolated from their context and exaggerated in scale in paintings that speak to human desire and the complications it presents personally, socially, and culturally. Often these works contain the artist’s written confessions of her own insecurities as she questions her simultaneous attraction and aversion to the subjects she depicts. In her paintings of female body parts and various foods, the artist probes gender politics and the constructs of femininity.

The Wellin Museum of Art will commission two new, site-specific murals, each 12 feet high by 16 feet wide, to be created by Jacquette at the Museum with the assistance of Hamilton students. Jacquette painted maquettes for the murals earlier this year. The two designs are inspired by the swimming pools depicted in luxury advertisements, showing illuminated clear-blue water, symbolizing perfection, warmth, and wealth. In Jacquette’s reinterpretation they are abstracted to soothing swirls of aqua. Golden Artist Colors, the world-renowned producers of artist’s oils, acrylics, and watercolors, located near the Museum, in New Berlin, NY, is developing paints specifically customized for these murals.

GRAPHIC MEMOIR

Also on view in the exhibition will be a series of 60 original gouaches on paper that comprise a graphic memoir entitled *Playground of My Mind* (2010-2015). This book will be copublished by Prestel and the Wellin Museum of

Art, available in February 2017.

The artist began working on the project in 2007, inspired by the adventure playgrounds from her youth growing up in New York City, one of which was designed by her father as part of the firm Ross Ryan Jacquette. The memoir depicts the Brutalist architecture of the playgrounds and surrounding landscape of New York City buildings. It also includes her mother, her 1970s fashions, and landmarks of the era like Alexander's department store. The adventure playgrounds were created by architects Richard Dattner, M. Paul Friedberg, and the partnership of Ross, Ryan, and Jacquette in New York City, and by Aldo van Eyck in Amsterdam. These structures encouraged constructive, imaginative play and gave renewed life to utopian notions of American and European modernist architecture.

Bearing affinities with Jacquette's other work, *Playground of My Mind* reflects upon the period of the 1960s and 1970s which was a tumultuous time of social change and activism in New York City and throughout the United States. Simultaneously, she considers the conflicted emotions that envelop idealized aspects of the past. Through Julia's exquisite architectural drawings and storytelling, the nostalgia for a bygone era of New York life is captured in vivid detail.

Related Programming

A section of the exhibition will be reserved for community-organized, play-oriented projects that reflect ideas put forth by *Playground of My Mind*. Megan Austin, Associate Director at the Wellin Museum of Art, will curate the exhibition's play-activity section.

Monograph

Julia Jacquette: Unrequited and Acts of Play will be accompanied by a major monographic publication with essays by Tracy L. Adler, Director, Wellin Museum of Art, and writer James Trainor. It will be copublished by the Wellin Museum of Art and Prestel in 2017.

About the Artist

Julia Jacquette (b. 1964) is an American artist who divides her time between Amsterdam and New York City. Her work has been shown extensively at galleries and museums around the world, including The Museum of Modern Art, The Museum of Fine Arts Boston, and The RISD Museum, among other institutions. Jacquette's work was included in the first installment of MoMA PS1's "Greater New York" exhibition in 2000, and the subject of the Opener Series of solo exhibitions by emerging artists at the Tang Teaching Museum at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs in 2004. She has taught at the Rhode Island School of Design, Princeton University, and is currently on the faculty at the Fashion Institute of Technology (NYC).

About the Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art

Designed by Machado Silvetti, the Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art at Hamilton College opened in October 2012. Through its exhibitions, public programs, and educational outreach, the museum promotes interdisciplinary approaches and the cross-fertilization of concepts and ideas vital to a liberal arts education. The museum works with emerging and established artists and collaborates with Hamilton students and faculty to develop programming exploring a wide range of disciplines. The museum features a 27-foot-high visible archive, a 6,200-square-foot exhibition space, and other amenities that foster common exchange and learning.

www.hamilton.edu/wellin

For media inquiries, please contact:

FITZ & CO

Liza Eliano, leliano@fitzandco.com, 646-589-0921

Meg Blackburn, mblackburn@fitzandco.com, 212-620-7390