

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Olive Ayhens: Metabolic Metropolis**

March 1 – April 12, 2024

Reception: Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup> from 6:00 – 8:00 PM



Olive Ayhens, *Metabolic Metropolis*, 1996, Oil on canvas, 54 x 48 inches.

between urban developments and the living world. In *Metabolic Metropolis*, the artist tackles what she describes as “the aesthetics of pollution.” Within the work, there’s a city that looks to be bound by the forces of nature that enclose it, with sprawling mountains and hills looming overhead and a discolored body of water filling the canvas below. There’s a clear effort to commentate on the effect we as humans have on the environment around us, a point that is only further accentuated by the lines of vehicles driving along the polluted ocean. Yet even when exploring the negative, Ayhens never neglects the good in humans’ relationship with nature. Indeed, the polluted water is not only home to a pair of angelic swans, but it is also painted in warm and vibrant colors that mimic that of an inviting sunset.

The artist's intrigue with New York City is a consistent thread woven throughout all the watercolors in the exhibition. Whether it's a meticulously detailed study of skyscrapers present in *From Empire State* or a fantastical interpretation of an evening view from her studio situated in Brooklyn Heights found in *Expanse: Brooklyn Bridge Park*, Ayhens' keen ability to represent the seemingly ordinary as anything but predictable. She often experiments with post-cubist space, vanishing points, and line work, displaying a palpable confidence in manipulating reality to elicit the true feeling the city and the surrounding nature invokes for many.

Olive Ayhens (b. Oakland, CA) received her BFA and MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute. In addition to her extensive exhibition history, Ayhens has been the recipient of numerous awards and grants including the Joan Mitchell Grant, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Award and Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation Individual Support Grant. Artist residencies include The Walsh Sharpe Art Foundation Space Program, MacDowell Colony, Fundacion Valparaiso, the Salzburg Kunsterhaus, Yaddo Artist Residency, Djerassi Artist Residency, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, the Roswell Artist Residency, the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, the Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program and most recently at the Artists-in-Residence program at the Joan Mitchell Center in New Orleans. The artist lives and works in New York City.

*Olive Ayhens: Metabolic Metropolis* will be on view from March 1 – April 12, 2024. An opening reception will be held on Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup> from 6:00 – 8:00 PM. Gallery hours are Monday through Friday, 11:00 am to 6:00 pm and Saturday from 12:00 pm to 5:00 pm. For additional information and/or visual materials, please contact the gallery at (212) 750-0949 or by email at [info@booksteinprojects.com](mailto:info@booksteinprojects.com).

Bookstein Projects is pleased to announce an exhibition of paintings and works on paper by Olive Ayhens made between 1996 and 2023. This is the artist's sixth solo show with the gallery.

Ayhens' work has often focused on the intersection between the man-made and natural world; blending bustling cityscapes with rich vistas to transform familiar locations into dreamlike compositions. Spanning the last twenty-eight years of the artist's practice, the paintings in this exhibition provide a glimpse into Ayhens' unique vision of various environments and her ability to emphasize the beauty in the world, in spite of and thanks to its' flaws.

It's apparent Ayhens has a deep appreciation for the places she inhabits and it's this appreciation that allows her to see beyond surface level recreations of her surroundings to capture the consistent push and pull