

The Tourists: Ellen Harvey and JMW Turner

May 18 - September 26, 2021

10 years after appearing in the gallery's opening exhibition *Revealed*, artist Ellen Harvey returns to Turner Contemporary opening the anniversary programme with her first UK solo show *The Tourists*, an exhibition paired with works by JMW Turner.

The Tourists explores themes of tourism and ecology, our relationship to images, architecture and place, destruction and loss. Working in painting, sculpture and digital media, this exhibition brings together a group of Harvey's large-scale installations comprised of meticulously rendered paintings and engravings. The centre-piece to the show is a new work called *The Disappointed Tourist*, comprising over 200 paintings of sites that have disappeared. From the Temple of Bel in Syria to Brandy Bucks restaurant in Margate, Harvey has crowd sourced places from across the world. Embarking on this work before the Covid-crisis, it has developed an unexpected resonance.

"After a year where we've all been disappointed tourists, it feels like a good time to explore what it is that we really love about our world and to think about how we can tread more lightly on the beauties that we have all longed to visit."

Harvey has selected two groups of works by JMW Turner, which resonate with her own explorations into image-making, experience and place. They focus on two very different tourist destinations: the ancient ruins of Italy, which Turner longed to visit from a young age, and Margate, which captured his imagination in his later years. Harvey has had a long interest in JMW Turner and Margate, and in 2011 she created *Arcadia* in response to Turner's relationship with Margate for Turner Contemporary's opening show *Revealed*.

The exhibition will also include *The Mermaid: Two Incompatible Systems Intimately Linked* (2019), a 34-meter-long painting, depicting a cross-section of Florida from Miami Beach to the Everglades National Park, drawn from satellite imagery, and *Alien Souvenir Stand* (2013) a souvenir stand created by fictional aliens invented by Harvey, which is hand-painted with 118 sites in the future ruins of Washington DC.

Ellen Harvey is a Kent-born conceptual artist living and working in Brooklyn. Her work pairs traditional representational aesthetics with post-modern strategies, such as institutional critique, mapping, appropriation and pastiche to explore diverse but related issues such as the ecological implications of the picturesque and the relationship between art and nostalgia. She is known for her large-scale public artworks and her complex museum installations for institutions such as the Barnes Foundation, The Bass Museum of Art, The Whitney Museum, The Corcoran Gallery of Art and the Pennsylvania Academy of Art, among others. She has exhibited extensively in the U.S. and internationally and was included in the 2008 Whitney Biennial. She is a graduate of Harvard College, Yale Law School and the Whitney Independent Study Program and is the recipient of numerous awards including a Smithsonian Artists Research Fellowship and a John Simon Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship. Her work has been the subject of several books and she is the author of *New York Beautification Project*, recently reissued in paperback. The works in *The Tourists* will be traveling to the Salzburg Museum der Moderne in October where they will be part of an expanded retrospective of Harvey's work.

For additional information, please contact Kimberley Dadds (kimberleydaddsfreelance@gmail.com).



Photograph: Thierry Bal / Turner Contemporary

The Disappointed Tourist



The Disappointed Tourist, Ellen Harvey, 2021. Acrylic and oil on 220 cradled Gessoboard panels, each 24 x 18" (61 x 46 cm), acrylic on wall. Overall height: 13' 6" (4.11 m). Overall width: 57' 9" (17.6 m). Photograph: Thierry Bal / Turner Contemporary.

The Disappointed Tourist is an ongoing series of paintings of places that members of the public have submitted in response to the question:

Is there some place that you would like to visit or revisit that no longer exists?

To date, over 300 people from over 30 countries have taken part in the project and Harvey has completed over 200 paintings. While the largest category of submissions is of happy childhood memories, particularly of amusement parks, people have also used the project to call attention to the physical scars of conflict, racism, inequality, colonialism and climate change as well as to memorialize beloved events or places. The installation includes unfinished paintings to signal that the project can never be complete. Turner Contemporary is the first venue to show the project.

To submit sites to be painted or to view individual paintings and read people's reasons for submitting them, visit www.disappointedtourist.org.



The Disappointed Tourist, Ellen Harvey, 2021. Acrylic and oil on 220 cradled Gessoboard panels, each 24 x 18" (61 x 46 cm), acrylic on wall. Overall height: 13' 6" (4.11 m). Overall width: 57' 9" (17.6 m). Photography: Thierry Bal / Turner Contemporary.



The Disappointed Tourist, Ellen Harvey, 2021. Acrylic and oil on 220 cradled Gessoboard panels, each 24 x 18" (61 x 46 cm), acrylic on wall. Overall height: 13' 6" (4.11 m). Overall width: 57' 9" (17.6 m). Photography: Thierry Bal / Turner Contemporary.



The Disappointed Tourist, Ellen Harvey, 2021. Acrylic and oil on 220 cradled Gessoboard panels, each 24 x 18" (61 x 46 cm), acrylic on wall. Overall height: 13' 6" (4.11 m). Overall width: 57' 9" (17.6 m). Photography: Thierry Bal / Turner Contemporary.

The Alien Souvenir Stand



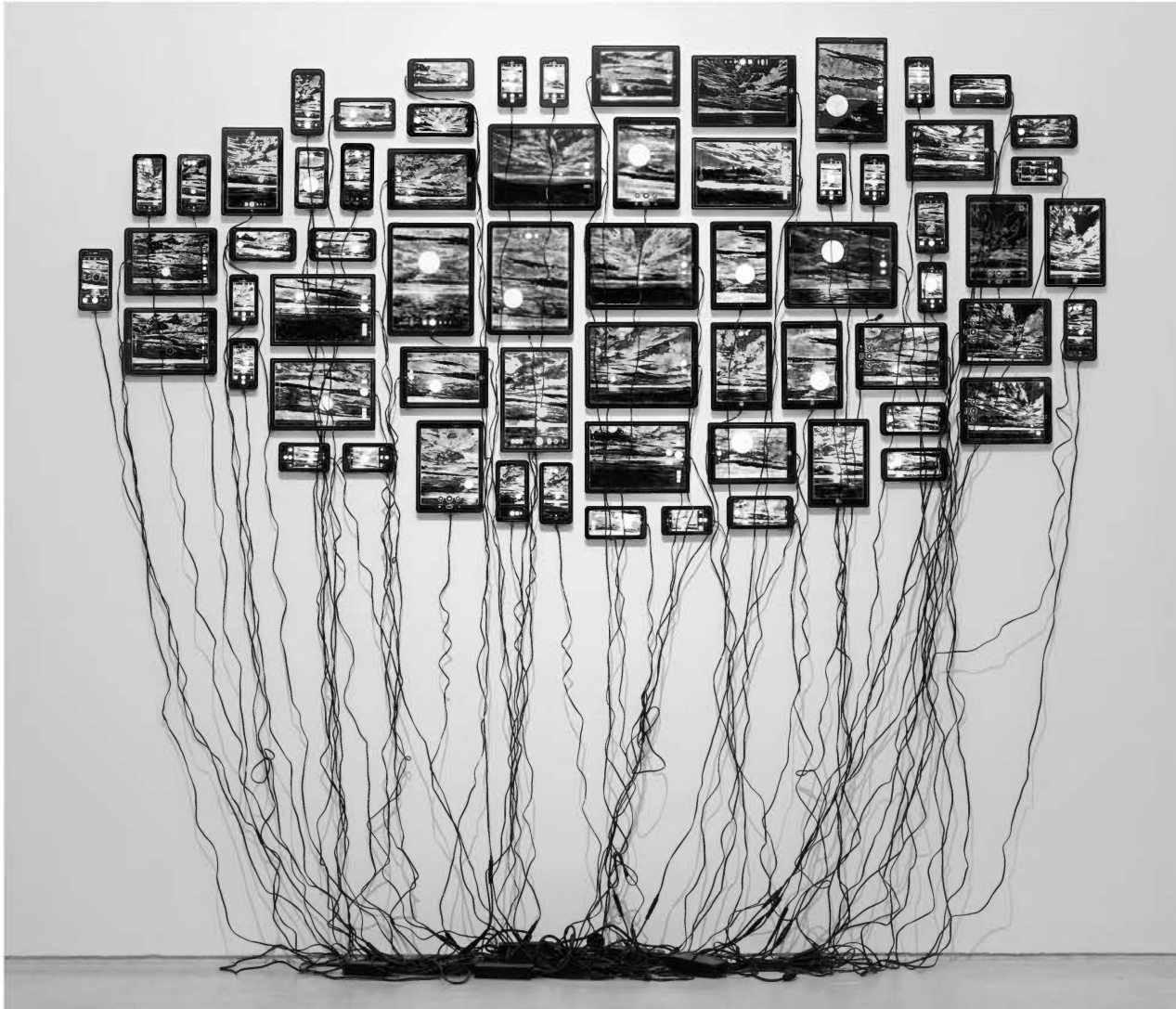
Alien Souvenir Stand, Ellen Harvey, 2013. Oil on aluminum, watercolor on Gessoboard, propane tanks, 10 x 17 x 5' (3.4 x 5.2 x 1.5 m). Thierry Bal / Turner Contemporary.

A souvenir stand dispensing hand-painted souvenirs and guides to the ruins of Washington D.C. for future extra-terrestrial visitors to Earth when the planet has become an uninhabited waterless desert. The alien visitors become the last in a long line of civilizations to fall for the charms of the classical and neoclassical ruins that punctuate the landscape, leading them to speculate about the lost pillar-builders of Earth, who they decide were probably a race of telepathic ocean-dwellers who swam upstream annually to flirt and build pillars.



Alien Souvenir Stand, Ellen Harvey, 2013. Oil on aluminum, watercolor on Gessoboard, propane tanks, 10 x 17 x 5' (3.4 x 5.2 x 1.5 m). Thierry Bal / Turner Contemporary.

On the Impossibility of Capturing a Sunset (in Margate)



Plexiglas mirrors laser-engraved to resemble a variety of phones and other devices and then hand-engraved in the style of Turner's engravings with views of a sunset. The engravings are all based on one photograph of a Margate sunset in a deliberate mimicry of the repeated attempts familiar to anyone who has ever tried to photograph natural beauty and been disappointed with the results. The installation provides the modern technological counterpoint to Turner's notebooks of sketches of the Margate sky.

On the Impossibility of Capturing a Sunset (in Margate), Ellen Harvey, 2021. 65 Plexiglas mirrors hand and laser engraved, 65 Lumishietts, cords, overall: 59 x 118" (1.5 x 3 m). Photograph: Thierry Bal / Turner Contemporary.



Photograph: Thierry Bal / Turner Contemporary.

The Mermaid: Two Incompatible Systems Intimately Linked



The Mermaid: Two Incompatible Systems Intimately Linked, Ellen Harvey, 2020. Acrylic and oil on 60 aluminum panels, each 40 x 60' (1.02 x 1.52 m). Overall height: 10' (3.05 m). Overall width: 100' (30.48 m). Photograph: Thierry Bal / Turner Contemporary.

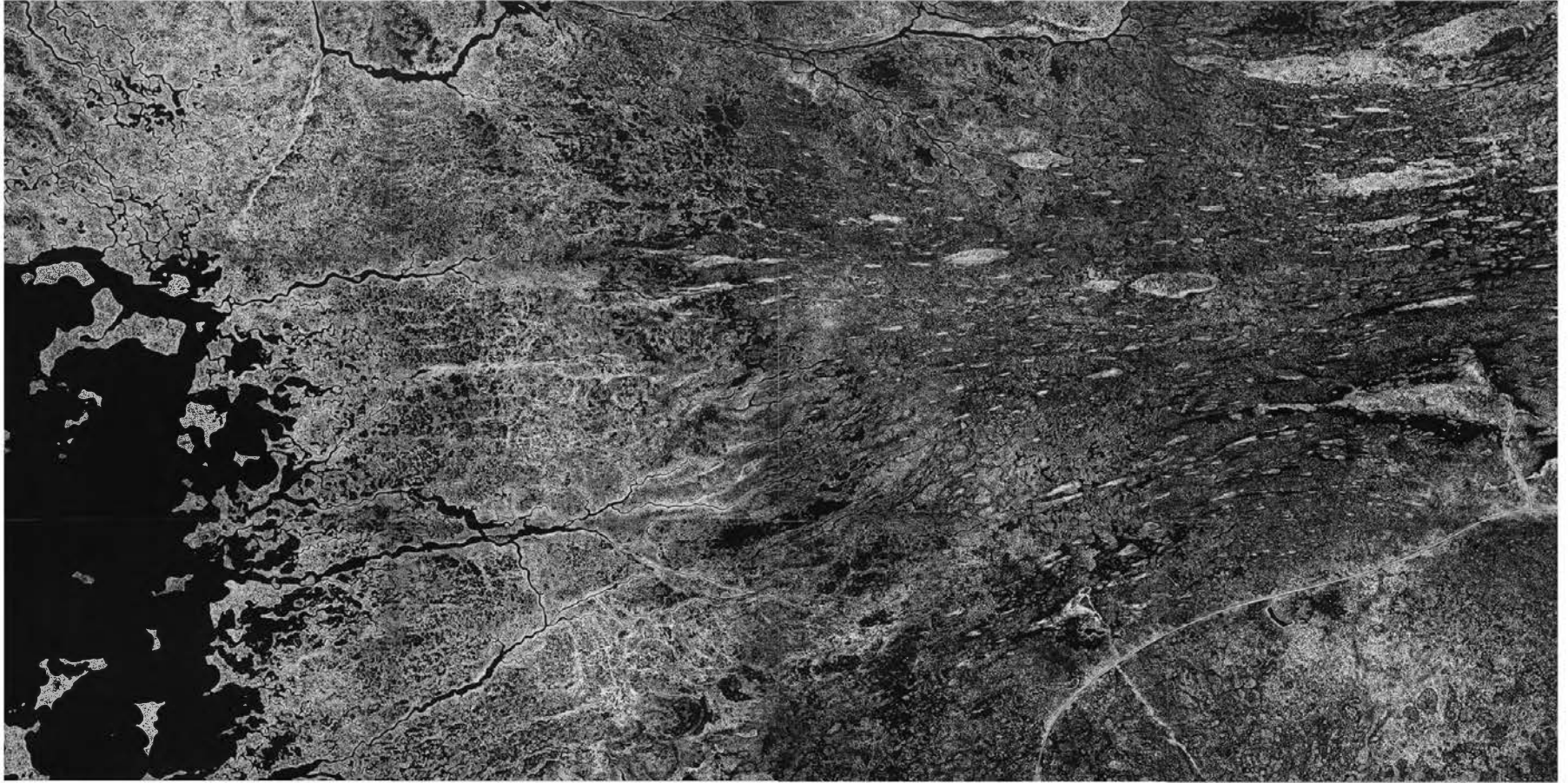
An intricate painting that contrasts the man-made with the natural landscape, based on a diagonal satellite view of Florida reaching from the Bay of Biscayne through the great watershed of the Everglades to Miami Beach and the Atlantic Ocean. This landscape is threatened by sea-level rise and the enormous size of the painting reflects both the daunting scale and complexity of the challenge. The halfway point of the painting is the transition between the Everglades National Park and the greater Miami area; the painting is equally divided between the two types of landscape, just as a mermaid is half human and half fish.



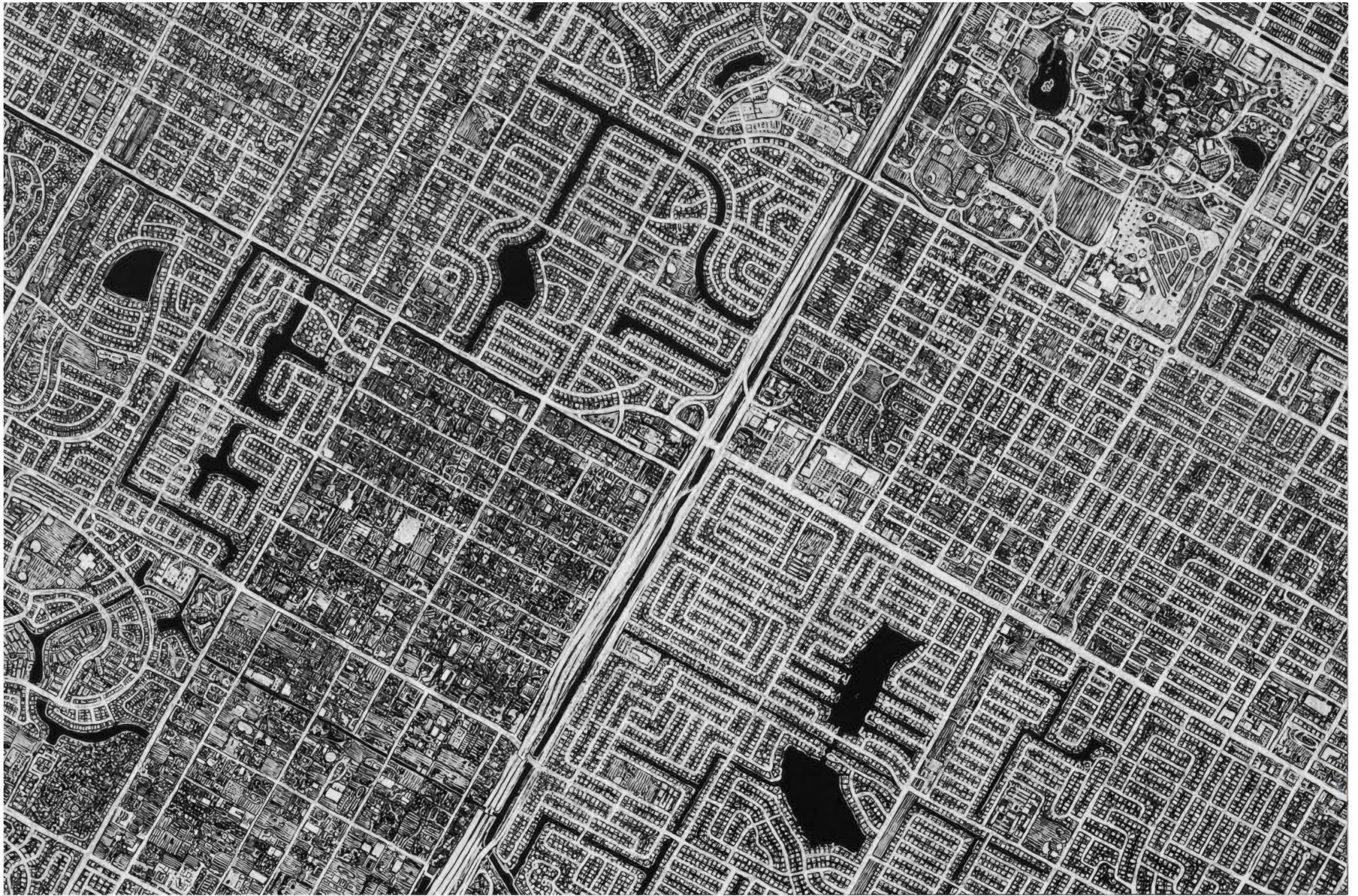
The Mermaid: Two Incompatible Systems Intimately Linked, Ellen Harvey, 2020. Acrylic and oil on 60 aluminum panels, each 40 x 60' (1.02 x 1.52 m). Overall height: 10' (3.05 m). Overall width: 100' (30.48 m). Photograph: Thierry Bal / Turner Contemporary.



The Mermaid: Two Incompatible Systems Intimately Linked, Ellen Harvey, 2020. Acrylic and oil on 60 aluminum panels, each 40 x 60' (1.02 x 1.52 m). Overall height: 10' (3.05 m). Overall width: 100' (30.48 m). Photograph: Thierry Bal / Turner Contemporary.



The Mermaid: Two Incompatible Systems Intimately Linked (detail), Ellen Harvey, 2020. Acrylic and oil on 60 aluminum panels, each 40 x 60' (1.02 x 1.52 m). Overall height: 10' (3.05 m). Overall width: 100' (30.48 m). Photograph: Etienne Frossard.



The Mermaid: Two Incompatible Systems Intimately Linked (one panel), Ellen Harvey, 2020. Acrylic and oil on 60 aluminum panels, each 40 x 60' (1.02 x 1.52 m). Overall height: 10' (3.05 m). Overall width: 100' (30.48 m). Photograph: Thierry Bal / Turner Contemporary.

Picture(sque)



An antique Claude Glass (a black convex mirror used in the 18th Century for viewing the landscape, so named because its effect was thought to resemble the paintings of Claude Lorrain) is hung over a contemporary mirror, contrasting the two views.

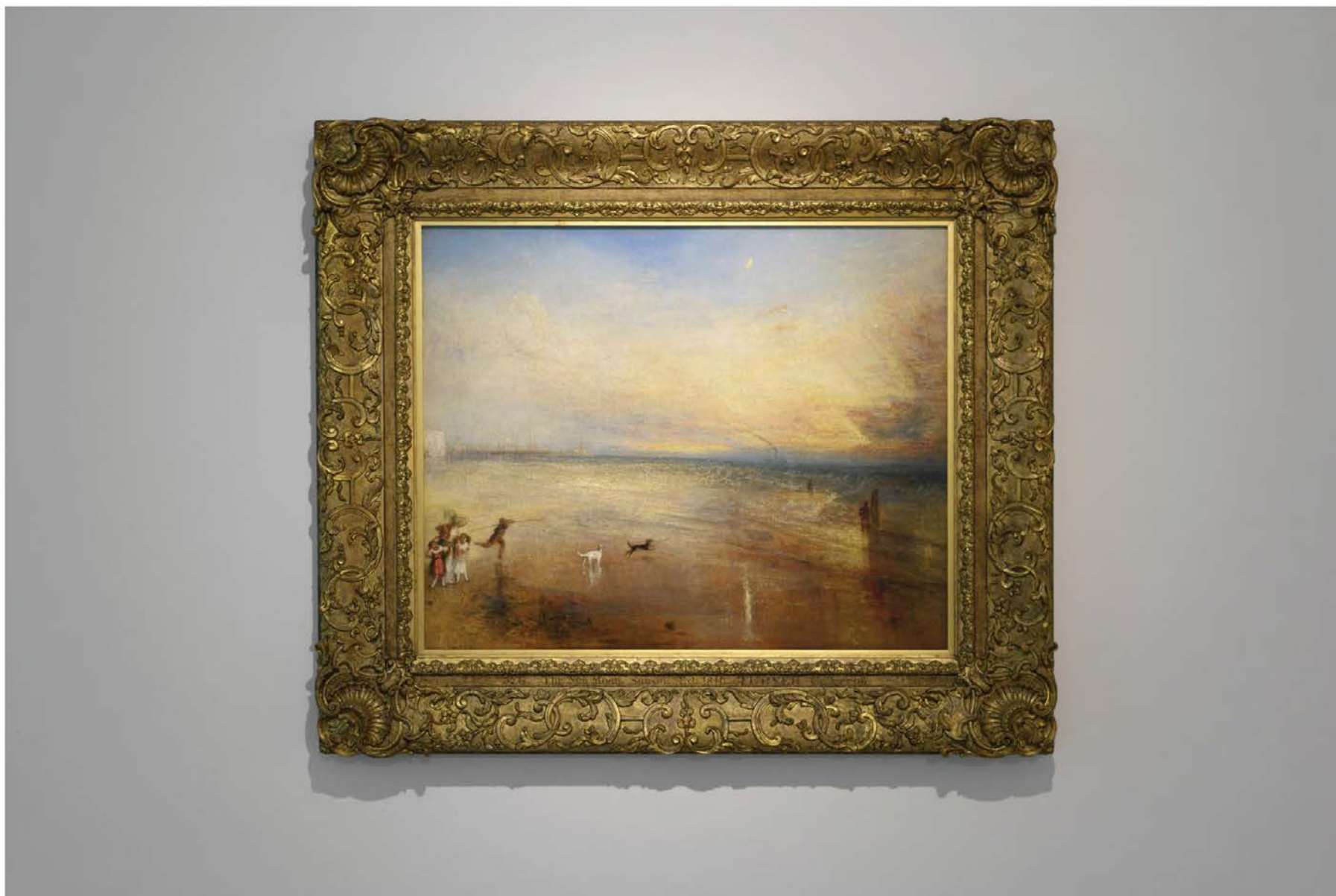
Picture(sque), Ellen Harvey, 2017. Antique Claude Glass, float glass mirror, hook, plywood. Mirror: 23.5 x 21 x 0.5 in (58 x 53 cm), Claude Glass (closed): 5 x 4 x 0.75" (13 x 10 x 2 cm). Photograph: Thierry Bal / Turner Contemporary.

Nostalgia



Nostalgia, Ellen Harvey, 2017. Two identical oval frames, gold leaf, each: 8.25 x 10.5" (21 x 27 cm). Photograph: Thierry Bal / Turner Contemporary.

Two second-hand frames: one gilded and one left in its original mildewed state.



The New Moon or "I've lost My Boat, You shan't have your Hoop, JMW Turner, exhibited 1840. Photograph: Thierry Bal / Turner Contemporary

Room of Sublime Wallpaper



Angled mirrors hung over newspaper on the back wall of a wooden room reflect a decorative painting of a doubled view of St. Bernard's Pass on the two side walls. Upon entering, the viewer's reflection becomes visible, breaking the illusion of a salon-style hanging of landscape "paintings."

Room of Sublime Wallpaper (II), Ellen Harvey, 2008. Oil on 16 wooden panels (each 48 x 48" (1.22 x 1.22 m), bolts, newspaper and acrylic on 6 wood panels (each 1.22 x 1.22m), Plexiglas mirrors on metal swivel mounts. Overall: 8 x 12 x 12' (2.44 x 3.66 x 3.66 m). Photograph: Thierry Bal / Turner Contemporary.



Room of Sublime Wallpaper (II), Ellen Harvey, 2008. Oil on 16 wooden panels (each 48 x 48" (1.22 x 1.22 m), bolts, newspaper and acrylic on 6 wood panels (each 1.22 x 1.22m), Plexi-glas mirrors on metal swivel mounts. Overall: 8 x 12 x 12' (2.44 x 3.66 x 3.66 m). Photograph: Thierry Bal / Turner Contemporary.

New York Beautification Project



New York Beautification Project, Ellen Harvey, 2001. 82 framed texts and photographs by Jan Baracz/Ellen Harvey Studio: each 14 x 11" (35.5 x 28 cm). Photograph: Thierry Bal / Turner Contemporary.

The New York Beautification Project consisted of forty traditional oval landscape paintings in oils that Harvey painted directly onto existing graffiti sites throughout New York City, without permission, from the summer of 1999 to the early spring of 2001 in an exploration of how laws against graffiti were differentially enforced based on the gender and race of the artist and the aesthetics of the artwork. The book that Harvey wrote about her funny and often unsettling experiences on the streets has recently been reissued as a paperback. Turner Contemporary is exhibiting both the photographs of the paintings and Harvey's accompanying texts.

Concrete pylon in Highbridge Park at 181st Street and Amsterdam Avenue, Washington Heights, Manhattan

June 1999

1

This is how it started. Mayday Productions, which was a group of curators and artists, asked me to do a piece for "Parking," a one-day art event in Highbridge Park next to the East River, which was being organized by Laurie De Chiara. The park had just been renovated by the New York Restoration Project, and the event was supposed to persuade the community that it was safe to use the park again. It had been a pretty scary place. While clearing away all the stripped, stolen cars, the volunteers had even found a human torso in a bag. The volunteers were very romantic about the park, though. They kept on pointing out how beautiful it was.

I'm a painter, and this was the first time anyone had asked me to do anything outdoors, so I thought I'd better paint something. I bought a lot of horribly expensive gold paint and painted all the vandalized lampposts in the park gold. My friends helped.

Because I finished early with the lampposts, I thought I would paint some graffiti to add to all the existing graffiti. I spent two days painting a little oval landscape over a graffiti tag on one of the highway overpass pillars. I had never painted a landscape before, so I stole the background from Nicolas Poussin's *Landscape with Diogenes*. I thought a classical landscape would be a nice reflection of the park's aspirations. It also seemed like a good tag for a white European painter like me.

The park was quite busy. On the first day, a man masturbated in the bushes opposite me for what seemed like an improbably long time. Then a boy came by and asked what I was doing. I showed him and he said, "Man, that's a good job — how'd you get a job like that?" He then asked me how much I was paid, and when I said that I was doing it for free, he said, "Man, you've got to get a better job." The second day, a teenage couple came by and looked at the painting and said that it was "*muy romantico*" and then went into the bushes together. Fortunately, the man from the day before wasn't there anymore. A lot of art people came to the show. There weren't many people from the neighborhood except for the park regulars, who looked a bit surprised.

I don't know who "ARD" is, but he or she later tagged the painting with a very small "ARD" in magic marker. I went back to take a photograph of the mini-tag, but my boyfriend Thom and I got mugged by a teenage boy. He claimed to have a gun, but we couldn't see it. Despite the invisible gun, we gave him \$15, which made him go away. He didn't take my camera, but I decided not to stick around to take a photograph. I don't know if this painting is still around or not, since I've not gone back.



New York Beautification Project, Ellen Harvey, 2001. Framed text and photograph by Jan Baracz/Ellen Harvey Studio: each 14 x 11" (35.5 x 28 cm).

Southeast corner of West 14th Street and Tenth Avenue, Chelsea,
Manhattan

November 2000

6

This painting was on the wall of a meatpacking plant. The wall already had a lot of graffiti. The meatpackers came by right away to tell me to leave, but then they decided that they liked the project and let me stay. The painting was based on a painting by Ludwig Richter of a pond in Poland. The workers kept coming back to see how it was going so it was hard to concentrate.

Halfway through the second day, I was suddenly slammed against the wall. Someone grabbed my arms and started banging me headfirst against the concrete. I thought I was being mugged. I was surprised to be mugged at two in the afternoon, but mainly I was terrified. Then I got turned around and saw that it was the police. There was a moment of silence before one of the two cops said, "We thought you were homeless." I said the only thing that occurred to me, which was "I'm not homeless." They looked at me for a bit, and then one of them asked, "You got permission to paint that?" I was so flustered that I said, "Well, not exactly, but it seems to be OK with the meatpackers." So one of the cops went off to the plant to see if I had permission and the other one stayed to make sure that I didn't run away. He told me that they'd been told to clean up the Meatpacking District. I tried to explain what I was doing, but he didn't seem very interested. He just kept yelling that the mayor, Rudy Giuliani, hated graffiti and that they were going to arrest me if I was painting without permission. I offered to paint over my painting so that the wall would look like it had before I came — covered with graffiti but without any landscape. This seemed only to enrage him further: "You don't touch that wall, ever, you understand?" Finally, his partner came back and pointed out that there was no way I could have permission, since the owner of the building was apparently dead. After shouting a bit more and telling me that they would arrest me if they ever saw me again, they let me go. Sometimes it really is a good thing to be a white woman in her thirties.

I didn't dare go back, so this painting never got finished. I'm not very brave. I didn't file a complaint, because I didn't want to bring myself to the attention of the police when I still had so many more paintings to do. The wall is all clean and repainted now and fits in well with the Meatpacking District's swank new look.



Twin Planet Protest



Twin Planet Protest, Ellen Harvey, 2017 – 2019. Oil on two wood panels, each 20 x 20" (50 x 50 cm), wood sticks. Photography: Thierry Bal / Turner Contemporary.

Two identically sized paintings of the Earth and the Moon, suitable for taking to protests. The Earth has attended several climate crisis protests; the Moon has focused on political issues.



Twin Planet Protest, Ellen Harvey, 2017 - 2019. Oil on two wood panels, each 20 x 20" (50 x 50 cm), wood sticks. Photograph: Ellen Harvey Studio.