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Before Arriving: Daniela Campins and Rema Ghuloum

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*Though featuring work by two artists with divergent perspectives and backgrounds, this exhibition finds unity in its exploration of abstraction. The resulting artworks are a testament to its power to express the otherwise inexplicable. Opens February 1 at LAUNCH.*

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Daniela Campins focuses on the invisible forces and occurrences that drive our universe, morphing them into things we can see and feel. Concepts like gravity, buoyancy, pulling and dissolution feature prominently in her work, distilled into their purest, non-representational essences. Sometimes her paintings are more clearly influenced by reality, imitating instances like a rain shower, or the tug of gravity on an individual water drop. In Campins' hands, paint and ink become protagonists rather than inert tools of expression: each daub of viscous paint or drip of diluted ink has its own message and tone to impart. These elements connect, blend and clash on the negative space of blank canvas, creating clear and expressive pieces of art in the process.



Daily walks to the studio play an integral part in Ghuloum's artistic process. The sights that Ghuloum observes on her outings along with those in her studio translate into her paintings and sculptures. These inspirations vary - from the color of road markings to the shapes cast by shadows or intensity of sunlight filtering through a fence. Out of all of these things however, walls are of particular interest to Ghuloum - both as physical and psychological entities. Like her canvases, they are neutral spaces, ripe to bear the marks of human experience. They represent boundaries, barriers and the point where spaces converge.

Rema Ghuloum's recent work draws inspiration from the still life paintings of Giorgio Morandi. However, rather than using familiar household objects, Ghuloum arranges her sculptures into still life scenes and then paints impressions utilizing direct examination and memory. This process allows her to explore the nuances of observation and to recall that sense of existing both in the present and the past.

Before Arriving is art that engages the audience's perspectives and imagination. The journey from real-world inspiration to finished painting allows many interpretations. Most of all, Before Arriving's allure lies in what it reveals of the women who create it, the objects that inspire them and the personalities that transform observation into art.

Rema Ghuloum received her BFA in Drawing and Painting from California State University, Long Beach in 2007 and her MFA from California College of the Arts in San Francisco in 2010. Rema was a recipient of the Esalen Pacifica Prize in 2012, the Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant in 2010, Max L. Gatov Award in 2007, and the CSULB Merit award in 2007. Rema has exhibited nationally and internationally at venues like the Cue Foundation, UCLA's New Wight Gallery, George Lawson Gallery, Triple Base Gallery, den Contemporary, UCSB's Gallery 479, UC Berkeley's Worth Ryder Gallery, CSULB University Art Museum, West LA College, and Arka Gallery in Vladivostok, Russia. Rema currently lives and works in Los Angeles, CA.

Daniela Campins (born 1976, Leeds, England) grew up in Maracay, Venezuela and moved to the United States in 1995. She received an MFA from UC Santa Barbara in 2011 and a BFA in Drawing and Painting from California State University Long Beach in 2008. Her work has been included in exhibitions at The Torrance Museum of Art, Boom, GLAMFA, New Wight Gallery in UCLA, Atkinson Gallery at the Santa Barbara City College, the Santa Barbara Museum of Fine Art, Reynolds Gallery in Richmond, Virginia; Art Platform-Los Angeles, the Rheeway Gallerie (CA) and Expressiones Cultural Center in Connecticut. Campins was a 2011 VCUarts Painting and Printmaking Fountainhead Fellow. Daniela currently lives and works in Los Angeles.