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**MID-CAREER SURVEY OF WORK BY JULIA JACQUETTE ON DISPLAY AT THE
VISUAL ARTS CENTER OF NEW JERSEY
SEPTEMBER 22, 2017 THROUGH JANUARY 14, 2018**



Water, 2010, oil on linen, 35 x 29.
Collection the Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum
of Art at Hamilton College. Purchase
William G. Roehrick '34 Art Acquisition
and Preservation Fund.



Page from Playground of My Mind,
2010-15, Gouache on paper, 58 sheets:
18 x 13 1/2 each. Courtesy of the artist. New York.

Summit, NJ (August 30, 2017)— Opening September 22, 2017 and on view through January 14, 2018, *Julia Jacquette Unrequited and Acts of Play* presents a mid-career survey of the artist's paintings and her new graphic memoir, *Playground of My Mind*. The exhibition is an abridged version of one that was on view at the Wellin Museum of Art at Hamilton College from February 18 to July 2, 2017. Curated by Tracy L. Adler, the Johnson-Pote Director of the Wellin Museum of Art, the show is installed at the Visual Arts Center of New Jersey by Mary Birmingham, the Art Center's Curator.

Comprising two distinct but related bodies of work, the exhibition includes paintings that explore the challenge of navigating one's own identity and self-worth through the contemporary media landscape (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 is inspired by adventure playgrounds designed in New York and Amsterdam during the 1960s and 1970s.

Through her oil paintings, Jacquette explores how Postwar and contemporary media depict the narrative of happiness through wealth and status. Her subjects include prepared foods, glamorized women, opulent interiors of the rich, shimmering swimming pools, and premium 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.

Jacquette’s paintings critique the idealized lifestyles portrayed in the media, focusing on commercialized objects of desire. Yet these material trappings are isolated from their context and exaggerated in scale in paintings that speak to the personal, social, and cultural complications attached to human desire. 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.

Jacquette observes, “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.”

Also on view in the exhibition are a series of original gouaches on paper from the artist’s graphic memoir *Playground of My Mind* (2010-2015). This book was co-published by Prestel and the Wellin Museum of Art 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. These structures encouraged constructive, imaginative play and gave renewed life to utopian notions of American and European modernist architecture. It also includes her mother, her 1970s fashions, and landmarks of the era like Alexander’s department store.

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. Through Julia’s exquisite architectural drawings and storytelling, the nostalgia for a bygone era of New York life is captured in vivid detail.

Julia Jacquette: Unrequited and Acts of Play is accompanied by a major monographic publication with essays by Tracy L. Adler, Director, Wellin Museum of Art, and writer James Trainor. The book is co-published by the Wellin Museum of Art and Prestel and is forthcoming in Fall 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 Visual Arts Center of New Jersey

For more than 80 years, the Visual Arts Center of New Jersey has been exclusively dedicated to viewing, making, and learning about contemporary art. Recognized as a leading non-profit arts organization, the Art Center's renowned studio school, acclaimed exhibitions, and educational outreach initiatives serve thousands of youth, families, seniors, and people with special needs every year.

The Visual Arts Center of New Jersey is located at 68 Elm Street in Summit, New Jersey. Adult and children's group tours are available throughout the year. Gallery Hours: Monday to Wednesday and Friday: 10AM to 5PM; Thursday 10AM to 8PM; and Saturday & Sunday 11 AM to 4 PM. Please call 908-273-9121 to confirm holiday hours. Visit www.artcenternj.org for more information.

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