



SITE SANTA FE PRESENTS

***Mary Weatherford: Canyon – Daisy – Eden***

April 16, 2021– September 5, 2021



Mary Weatherford, *Nagasaki*, 1986, Oil on canvas, 82 x 82 1/4 in.

**For Immediate Release: March 31, 2021 – SITE Santa Fe, NM** Three decades of paintings brought together at SITE Santa Fe for a comprehensive look at Mary Weatherford’s inventive and influential art. Over the last three decades, Mary Weatherford has developed a rich and diverse painting practice, from her early 1990s target paintings based on operatic heroines, to the expansive, gestural canvases overlaid with neon glass-tubing that brought attention to Weatherford’s practice in the 2010s. *Mary Weatherford: Canyon—Daisy—Eden* presents a survey of Weatherford’s career, drawing from several distinct bodies of work made between 1989–2017. As constant experiments with color, scale, and materials, these works as a whole reveal the continuity of Weatherford’s preoccupation with memory and experience, both personal and historical.

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Originally from Ojai, California, Weatherford earned a B.A. in art history and visual arts from Princeton University, and an M.F.A from the Milton Avery School of Fine Arts at Bard College. In 1985, she participated in the Whitney Independent Study Program where she developed her earliest paintings, some of which include colored targets and silkscreened images of flowers, vines, and female figures titled after literary heroines. A profound and longstanding study of nature is reflected in other works from the late 1990s and early 2000s. Weatherford incorporated elements of assemblage into a series of stained canvases, including physical shells, sponges, and starfish. In 2005, Weatherford embarked upon a pivotal series of paintings based on plein-air drawings she made of a sea cave on Pismo Beach, a coastal area a few hours north of Los Angeles.

Her 2012 Bakersfield Project was the first series of paintings to incorporate neon tubing and revealed a new way of making that occupies the artist to this day. The works reflect Weatherford's previous engagement with gestural forms and immersive scale and are drawn from memory using a variety of techniques and artistic references. The colors and textures of the works indicate shifting lights, atmosphere, and mood, often evoking a specific time, locale, and temperature, such as Greek seafood restaurant murals and liquor store neon signs seen while driving at dusk in Bakersfield, California.

*Mary Weatherford: Canyon–Daisy–Eden* is organized by the Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College by guest curator Bill Arning and Tang Teaching Museum Dayton Director Ian Berry in collaboration with the artist. The presentation at SITE Santa Fe is organized by Assistant Curator Brandee Caoba, and Exhibitions Manager and Registrar Sage Sommer.

Thanks to Gagosian, David Kordansky Gallery, and Friends of the Tang for their support.

A forthcoming catalogue will be published in conjunction with the exhibition and will include an introductory essay by co-curator Bill Arning, a new interview with the artist by co-curator Ian Berry, writings by Elissa Auther, Arnold Kemp, Rebecca Morris, Michael St. John, and a story by Margaret Weatherford.

### **About SITE Santa Fe**

SITE Santa Fe opened in 1995 to present what was then the only international biennial of contemporary art in the United States, and one of only a handful of biennials around the world. From the very beginning, SITE established a commitment to a risk-taking and visionary perspective that continues to drive its programs today. Year-round exhibitions and educational programs encourage the audience's creative and intellectual potential and uphold the region's tradition of fostering avant-garde art. As an institution with a year-round contemporary art program, SITE hosts an Art & Culture series of lectures and performances, as well as an extensive education and outreach program for local schools, all of which attract over 20,000 local, national and international visitors annually. Since its launch, SITE has presented over 100 exhibitions — including ten biennials — of works by over 750 international artists.

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