

JANE LOMBARD GALLERY

For Immediate Release

Squeak Carnwath

What Before Comes After

October 22 – December 19, 2015

"Paintings are not ordinary objects. Painting is a carrier of meaning, of human touch. Each brush stroke or smear of pigment is freighted with philosophical inquiry."

New York, October 8, 2015 – Jane Lombard Gallery presents *What Before Comes After*, Squeak Carnwath's first solo exhibition in New York City in over a decade. The exhibition features a selection of Carnwath's paintings and cigar-box sculptures spanning 25 years of practice. Active in the Bay Area since the 1970s alongside artists such as Viola Frey and Jay DeFeo, Carnwath has developed a signature style that incorporates meticulously applied layers of oil paint with text, repeated symbolic iconography, and abstract patterns to create complex works which gradually reveal her personal exploration of representation, memory, and the human experience. The artist will be present for the opening reception on October 22 from 6-8 pm.

Carnwath's most recent 'song' series investigates the mind and its response to language and memory. Carnwath frequently incorporates hand-painted text, and in this series she has written the titles of songs in strips of intense color. These titles seem to float on the surface of the canvas; evoking the very songs they represent and triggering direct emotional responses in the viewer. Each painting is accompanied by an iPod shuffle, with a playlist carefully curated by the artist. These playlists strengthen the relationship between sight and sound. By listening, the viewer becomes an active participant, transforming Carnwath's artistic experience into one that is decidedly his or her own.

In works such as *The Whole Truth* (2006) and *Two of Everything* (2014-15), Carnwath's iconography gradually transforms into grids of saturated color, Fayum-like heads, funerary urns, one-sided LP records, and sinking ships. A symbol of nostalgia – the LP record - is paired with symbols of loss - the sinking ship, Roman death portrait, and urn; both refer to the cyclical passage of time while simultaneously placing her work within the long lineage of art history.

The repetition of her visual motifs extends beyond painting into her accompanying cigar-box sculptures. On the lid of each box, Carnwath continues her meditations on the act of painting by employing her familiar images of sinking ships and colorful geometric shapes. Inside, each box is filled with textured globs of recycled, excess paint. Though Carnwath is a self-described "painting chauvinist," it is important for her to work with everyday objects, forming a catalogue of her daily life. Her cigar boxes then function as hybrids of sculpture and painting, exploring the limits of each medium.

Carnwath's rich visual vocabulary speaks to both a continuity of style and an evolution of process. Painting is a way for her to reflect upon her psychological experience and to engage in a personal discovery that speaks to universal themes.

Squeak Carnwath has received numerous awards including two Individual Artist Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Society for the Encouragement of Contemporary Art (SECA) Award from San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Award for Individual Artists from the Flintridge Foundation. Carnwath is Professor Emerita at the University of California, Berkeley. She lives and works in Oakland, CA.