



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**ZINA SWANSON  
WATERING SHADOWS**

**SUMER, TĀMAKI MAKAURAU  
14 SEPTEMBER – 21 OCTOBER 2023**

There are garden hoses everywhere. Fashioned into various shapes, many have ceased to function as originally intended. Sometimes they appear as would-be shepherds' crooks, other times they become radiating waves, or framing devices and borders, or esoteric glyphs. None would appear to hold water. There are also branches and sticks. Dead limbs of trees and shrubs. And temporary fences with holes, and an empty sauna with no steam, and faces that are missing eyes. These are curiously strange paintings.

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Sumer is pleased to present *Watering Shadows*, an exhibition of new work by Ōtautahi Christchurch-based artist Zina Swanson. This is the artist's first solo exhibition in Tāmaki Maukaurau Auckland, and their third solo exhibition with the gallery. A series of new figurative paintings and polychromatic sculptures (all 2023), this exhibition is the latest instalment of a broad ongoing project that the artist has undertaken over the past decade.

With subjects drawn from her immediate surrounds—her garden and the streets near her home—Swanson sets up a series of conceptual propositions. (Or perhaps, conundrums would be the better word.) She brings together objects, many of which possess a logical association (i.e., plants and garden hoses), yet configures them in such a way that negates or complicates things that would otherwise be straightforward. They imbibe a suburban surrealism. When quizzed on one such work—a criss-crossing of garden hoses, streams of water, together with a branch of silver birch—she replied, “[the things], they are not speaking to one another”.

Swanson refers to the various inanimate objects within her works as would-be actors, yet she doesn't speak directly to the narratives that may be at play. Rather she focuses her explanation upon the mechanics of the painting: of how the objects are rendered or positioned (i.e., the tree branches in the works being traced from shadows cast; from the branch being placed between a lamp and the canvas. And for which she tells me makes their proportions somewhat askew). She would seem to like the fact that the works mystify, their meaning remaining oblique, cryptic, out of reach.

Swanson's paintings have a preoccupation with certain things, and thus these objects become a cast of sorts. Very often these are plants (both alive and dead), which are coupled with functional objects (tools, or receptacles), or base elements (fire and water, sunlight and rain), or parts of the artist's own body—specifically, those parts which are responsible for the senses (the eyes, nose, mouth, ears, or the hands, or head). The positioning of these things in relation to her own body, and her head and hands specifically, would suggest they are intended to convey an earnest desire to articulate her making sense of the world as *felt*. Bemusing, inexplicable; beyond science and rationalism. As articulations of what is dreamt.

**Zina Swanson** (b. 1981, Christchurch, New Zealand) lives and works in Ōtautahi Christchurch, Aotearoa New Zealand. She has exhibited extensively with solo and group presentations at most of New Zealand's top galleries and museums. These include the Christchurch Art Gallery, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, City Gallery Wellington, The Dowse Art Museum and Artspace Aotearoa. Her works are also held in the collections of Christchurch Art Gallery, Dunedin Public Art Gallery and The Dowse Art Museum, and she has been the recipient of the prestigious Frances Hodgkins Fellowship, and in 2014 was an Apexart New York Inbound Resident.



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Window Gallery



Zina Swanson  
*Spouts*, 2023  
Acrylic on canvas  
60.5 x 95 cm  
23 3/4 x 37 1/2 in  
(ZS-000037)

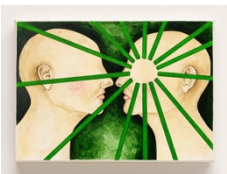
Main Gallery



Zina Swanson  
*Convolvulus Diaries 1*, 2023  
Acrylic on paper and wire, powdercoated steel  
211 x 259 x 45 cm  
83 x 102 x 17 3/4 in  
(ZS-000047)



Zina Swanson  
*Spa*, 2023  
Acrylic on canvas  
45.5 x 35 cm  
18 x 13 3/4 in  
(ZS-000044)



Zina Swanson  
*Self Portrait with Hose Rays*, 2023  
Acrylic on canvas  
25 x 36 cm  
9 3/4 x 14 1/4 in  
(ZS-000040)



Zina Swanson  
*Held*, 2023  
Acrylic on canvas  
65 x 65 cm  
25 1/2 x 25 1/2 in  
(ZS-000041)



Zina Swanson  
*Caught, 2023*  
Acrylic on canvas  
65 x 65 cm  
25 1/2 x 25 1/2 in  
(ZS-000042)



Zina Swanson  
*Driftwood Mimic, 2023*  
Acrylic on canvas  
40.5 x 40 cm  
16 x 15 3/4 in  
(ZS-000043)



Zina Swanson  
*How Tears Work, 2023*  
Glass, lacquered stainless steel, white bronze, powder-coated aluminium, artist's eyelashes  
160 x 16 x 8 cm  
63 x 6 1/4 x 3 1/4 in  
(ZS-000046)

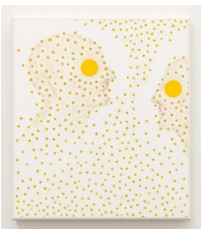


Zina Swanson  
*Water Shape, 2023*  
Acrylic on canvas  
95 x 60 cm  
37 1/2 x 23 1/2 in  
(ZS-000038)



Zina Swanson  
*Trapped Sun with Radiometer, 2023*  
Acrylic on canvas  
35.5 x 25 cm  
14 x 9 3/4 in  
(ZS-000039)

Back Office



Zina Swanson  
*Days Eyes, 2023*  
Acrylic on canvas  
40 x 35 cm  
15 3/4 x 13 3/4 in  
(ZS-000045)