



Cynthia Hawkins
Maps Necessary for a Walk in 4D
February 1–March 16, 2024

STARS is delighted to present a new exhibition of paintings and works on paper by Cynthia Hawkins, following the gallery's solo presentation of historical works at Art Basel Miami Beach.

In her new ongoing body of work, *Maps Necessary for a Walk in 4D*, Hawkins creates a series of instructions for trespassing from conventional space into the space-time of 4D. Weaving maps scrawled in oil bar through buoyant abstract spaces, the artist provides a guide for seeing reality anew. "These unreal spaces contain all possibilities one can imagine," Hawkins says.

Hawkins first investigated the fourth dimension in a series of late-1970s drawings. Humans cannot perceive themselves in space-time; this became precisely her objective, which required her to invent a new method of navigation. She began by mapping a path from her Upper West Side apartment to the 86th street subway station. She then elevated that path at an angle of 45 degrees, pushing her speculative walk into a new dimension between ground and sky.

In *Maps Necessary for a Walk in 4D*, Hawkins builds space through the tension between abstract forms, overlaying her 70s maps as a means of navigation. Depth results from contrast: proximate colors vibrate; translucent forms shroud opaque ones; perfect circles abut loosely drawn shapes. At the same time, the paintings refuse any sense of fixed perspective. The maps are shaky and exploratory, undermining the function of linear grids sometimes seen underneath. Line is no longer used to schematize space, but to transgress the picture plane's two dimensions. Under the sign of reappropriated geometry, vision is mobile, liberated.

Hawkins's reckonings with the fourth dimension build toward an argument: to reimagine reality, one must first reimagine space. This endeavor demands description in new terms; it demands movement beyond known experience. Abstraction becomes a necessary tool, a path toward hope, even freedom. Hawkins: "By not being real, these spaces are a great way to formulate a new world."

Cynthia Hawkins (b. 1950, Queens, NY) received a BA in painting from Queens College in 1977 and an MFA from Maryland Institute College of Art in 1992. In addition to her career as an artist, she was the long-time director of the Bertha V.B. Lederer Gallery at SUNY Geneseo and completed an American Studies Ph.D dissertation at the University of Buffalo on the role art played in Black society at the turn of the 19th century. Her one-person exhibitions include *Just Above Midtown*, New York (1981); Frances Wolfson Art Center, Miami (1986); Cinque Gallery, New York (1989); Queens College Art Center (1997); Buffalo Science Museum, Buffalo (2009); STARS, Los Angeles (2022); and *Ortuzar Projects*, New York (2023). She will have forthcoming presentations at Kaufmann Repetto, Milan; Hollybush Gardens, London; and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. Hawkins has received numerous awards, including the Helen Frankenthaler Award for Painting (2023); the Black Metropolis Research Consortium Fellowship (2009); The Herbert and Irene Wheeler Grant (1995); and the Brooklyn Museum Art School Scholarship (1972).