

[Intro Text]

**Elisheva Biernoff: Reservoirs of Time**

*The paintings are reservoirs of time and concentration, where everything is made on purpose. They are quiet and made over many months. – Elisheva Biernoff*

This exhibition features the small-format paintings of San Francisco-based artist Elisheva Biernoff (b. 1980), which are inspired by enigmatic photographs of other peoples' lives that affect her in one way or another. The pictures she collects and gravitates toward are taken by strangers and evoke an element of ambiguity and pensiveness. Because she does not know the story of each snapshot, other than what she intuits by looking at it, she imagines and reflects on the anonymous traces of lives and places that are for the most part mysterious. Recurring themes in Biernoff's practice—that inform which images she chooses to paint—include her interests in travel, the unfamiliar and strange, imperfections in the photographic image, the tension between banality and awe, and a sense of place in relation to scale. Examples of each can be identified in works present in this gallery.

Slow and methodical, Biernoff's process typically unfolds over a period of about three months. In that "reservoir of time," she completes a composition that is the same diminutive size as the photo she paints. Cumulatively, she constructs each likeness, layer by layer, detail by detail, adding small characteristics as she goes until eventually the picture adopts a photographic quality. Using thin sheets of plywood, she paints both sides so that the backside also resembles the back of the photograph turning each work into a completely rendered object. One often associates this kind of exacting representation with realism, yet the aspect of the unknown—or that which is ungraspable—takes this work in a different direction, which could be considered enigmatic realism.

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