UNION COLLEGE
FOUNDED 1795
MANDEVILLE GALLERY

The Chronicle

Nemett's art at home in "When We Lived Here"

August 30, 2017

Artist Laini Nemett explores the concept of home through collaged architectural environments she creates from cardboard models and large-scale oil paintings in "When We Lived Here," now at the Mandeville Gallery in the Nott Memorial.



Laini Nemett

The exhibition includes 32 works by Nemett, the John D. MacArthur Assistant Professor of Drawing and Painting at Union.

A reception will be held Wednesday, Sept. 27, 5-6:30 p.m. It is free and open to the public.

Interlacing building elements from travels, on-location image research and field studies, Nemett pieces together fragments of various places to investigate ways of conceiving and experiencing ideas of home.

She describes her work as a response to "personal histories as recalled by the buildings that house them…I collage and collapse planes to conjure the passing of time and the generations of lives lived between the aging walls."



Her works "evoke a sense of nostalgia and moments of recognition for the audience," independent curator Aaron Levi Garvey writes in the exhibition catalogue. "The artist forges new ground and explanations of how, why, where, when, and who interacts with buildings and the spaces they inhabit."

Nemett has spent a decade exploring questions of what defines the constructs of homes.

"Stairs, hallways, balconies, construction sites – details from interior and exterior spaces I pass through are the raw materials of my studio practice," she says.

Inspirations come from boarded-up buildings in her native Baltimore, Md., that constitute "skeletons of a family's history," and old façades and new condos in New York City's boroughs, including Queens, where Nemett maintains a studio.

Nemett received a B.A. from Brown University and M.F.A. from the Hoffberger School of Painting at the Maryland Institute College of Art. Her work has appeared in exhibitions in the U.S., Europe, China and Africa.

Her numerous awards and honors include an Art Works Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (2017); a Queens Council on the Arts New Works grant (2017); and a Joan Mitchell Foundation MFA Grant. In 2016 she participated in the Joan Mitchell Center Residency in New Orleans, where she made paintings of the lasting effects of Hurricane Katrina on the city's neighborhoods. Many of those are included in this exhibit.

In 2015, in a residency at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Nemett created work related to the renovation and building of Union's Feigenbaum Center for Visual Arts, also represented in this show.

She was a Fulbright Fellow in Barcelona (2006-07).

"When We Lived Here" was curated by Julie Lohnes, curator of Art Collections and Exhibitions, and co-sponsored by the Department of Visual Arts.

It runs through Dec. 3.