

ANNA VALDEZ**MY OWN PRIVATE ARCADIA****NOVEMBER 6 – DECEMBER 18, 2021**

OCHI is pleased to present *My Own Private Arcadia*, Anna Valdez's debut solo exhibition with the gallery, on view in Los Angeles, California from November 6 through December 18, 2021. An Artist's Reception will be held on Saturday, November 6 from 2:00 to 4:00pm PST.

My Own Private Arcadia features new paintings by Oakland-based artist Anna Valdez that move effortlessly in and around various genres of painting. Drawing upon the rich histories of landscape and still life—places and objects categorically separated yet fatefully intertwined with human presence—Valdez references, deconstructs, recreates, and celebrates painting. Valdez lovingly crafts saturated and dense scenes that appear to originate within the studio, becoming self-referential and boundless.

In *Landscape Paintings* (2021) a single desert landscape painting dominates the composition, its raw edge of canvas casting shade on a pink wall that displays more than a dozen small landscapes akin to marginalia in an illuminated manuscript. It is unclear whether these are postcards, sketches, photographs, magazine clippings, or small paintings, though the pile of artist monographs ostensibly full of even more unviewable landscapes perpetuates the tease. Since an image of a place is an object, Valdez's still life of landscapes deftly navigates new terrain, anchored by her palette table tucked into the corner, overlapping the largest landscape like a cactus bloom.

A real or imagined place, rustic or idyllic in nature, an arcadia provides peaceful, simple pleasures. After Valdez assembles groupings of objects, plants, books, ephemera, and artworks in her studio, she cultivates digital drawings, ceramics, prints, sculptures, and many, many paintings from each set up. Though some objects are personally significant, nothing is sacred in depiction—Valdez “paints from life, but doesn't adhere to it.” An ex-anthropologist and self-proclaimed unreliable narrator, Valdez creates multiple realities, perspectives, and portals. In *Shell Study with Decorative Landscape* (2021) a ceramic landscape of the sea sculpted by the artist hovers above a book about seashells, pinned open by a conch converted into a lamp, framed by potted plants and a bouquet of flora patterned fabrics. Valdez paints the pungent layers of reality with ease—an object, its representation, its abstraction, and its bibliography all peacefully coexisting. With even lighting and stiff drop shadows, Valdez eschews the passage of time and paints in a hyper vibrant spectrum of fuchsia, electric blue, tiger orange, violet, and hot pink—a reflection of the present, her presence, and her story told her way.

Anna Valdez (b. 1985, Sacramento, CA) is a multi-disciplinary artist who examines the relationship between objects, cultural formation, and collective consciousness. Creating epic tableaux in her studio, Valdez moves seamlessly between still life and landscape painting, collecting objects and making new ones, cultivation, observation, and fictionalization. Valdez received her MFA in painting from Boston University in 2013 and her BA in Anthropology and Art from University of California, Davis in 2009. Her work has been exhibited nationally at venues including Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, AR; North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh, NC; New Britain Museum of American Art in New Britain, CT; Cañada College in Redwood City, CA; Hashimoto Contemporary in San Francisco, CA and New York, NY; David B. Smith Gallery in Denver, CO; Richard Heller Gallery in Santa Monica, CA; 1969 Gallery and Nancy Margolis Gallery in New York, NY; Dianne Witte Gallery in Toronto, Canada; and OCHI in Sun Valley, ID and Los Angeles, CA. Valdez's work has been featured in publications including Juxtapoz Magazine, New American Paintings, Artsy, Metal Magazine, Daily Serving, and Big Red & Shiny.