

RENA BRANSTEN

GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hung Liu: Promised Land

April 29 – June 24, 2017

Reception: May 6 / 5-7pm

Rena Bransten Gallery is pleased to present *Hung Liu: Promised Land*, an exhibition of new paintings and works on paper based on photographs by American photographer Dorothea Lange. Hung Liu is known for her use of Chinese historical photographs, and *Promised Land* continues this exploration of history, now focused on America's Great Depression and Dust Bowl era. While Dorothea Lange's photographs have become almost synonymous with this era (with iconic images like *Migrant Mother*, 1936 and *White Angel Breadline*, 1933) Hung Liu's paintings, taken in conversation with the rest of her oeuvre, ask the viewer to consider these events in the larger sweep of the human condition. Liu reminds us that forced migration, economic devastation, poverty and hunger are not unique to country, race or culture, and her works at once acknowledge these tragedies, while celebrating the resilience of the human spirit.

Hung Liu's long interest in ideas of migration, immigration, and displacement, stems from her own immigration story and hardships during the Cultural Revolution, and is what drew her to the work of Dorothea Lange. Liu and Lange share an awareness of photographs as witness, of their ability to shape collective memory, of image as propaganda, and a courage to commit their beliefs. Countless hours researching and collecting images at Lange's archive (housed at the Oakland Museum of California) led Liu to images like *Oklahoma Family on the Road*, on which she based the painting *Westbound*. The family in these images is clad in their Sunday best, hitchhiking on the side of a country road, and Liu has surrounded them with dandelions (nature's vehicle for dreams). The low vantage gives them gravitas, the warm sun comfort. But we know their story – like for Steinbeck's *Joads*, the West had little to offer. While Liu's brightly colored, emphatic lines invigorate the surfaces of these works and suggest hopefulness, they are not without an air of irony, as the promised land remains unattainable.

Hung Liu was born in Changchun, China in 1948 and graduated from the Central Academy of Fine Art in Beijing. She immigrated to the U.S. in 1984 to attend the University of California San Diego where she received her MFA. Liu currently lives and works in Oakland, California and is a professor emeritus at Mills College. She has been the recipient of numerous awards including the Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant and the National Endowment of the Arts Painting Fellowship. Her work has been exhibited in the Whitney

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Museum of American Art, New York; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, among others. Major museum collections include the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., and the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. A traveling retrospective *Summoning Ghosts: The Art and Life of Hung Liu* was organized by the Oakland Museum of California in 2013.

A catalogue of the same title was published to accompany the exhibition.



White Angel Bread Line

2016

Oil on canvas

80 x 80 in.



Migrant Mother: Mealtime

2016

Oil on canvas

60 x 60 in.



August

2017

Oil on canvas

60 x 48 in.



Dreamcatcher, 2017

Oil on canvas

70 x 80 in.

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Fetching Water III, 2016

Oil on canvas

80 x 96 in.



The Readers, 2017

Oil on canvas

60 x 60 in.



Laborer: Farm Hand

2016

Oil on canvas

36 x 36 in.



Black Madonna

2016

Lithograph, Edition of 40

Image size: 27 3/4 x 21 3/4 in.

Paper size: 33 3/4 x 26 1/2 in.

Frame size: 37 x 30 in.



Dorothea Lange

2017

Oil on canvas

48 x 36 in.



Route 66

2016

Lithograph, Edition of 60

Image size: 18 x 25 3/4 in.

Paper size: 25 1/4 x 31 1/2 in.

Frame size: 28 5/8 x 34 7/8 in.

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Route 66 with Cat

2016

Lithograph, Edition of 40

Image size: 18 x 25 3/4 in.

Paper size: 25 1/4 x 31 1/2 in.

Frame size: 28 5/8 x 34 7/8 in.



Mocking Bird, 2017

Oil on canvas

48 x 48 in.



Lily Pad

2017

Oil on canvas

48 x 48 in.



Fetching Water I

2016

Oil on canvas

80 x 80 in.



Fetching Water II, 2016

Oil on canvas

80 x 80 in.

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Westbound
2016
Oil on canvas
96 x 48 in.



Companions, 2017
Watercolor on paper
14 1/8 x 20 in.



The Field
2017
Watercolor on paper
14 1/8 x 20 in.

Dorothea Lange:



Children and home of migratory cotton workers, migratory camp, southern San Joaquin Valley, California, Nov. 1936, 1936
Vintage gelatin silver print
Print size: 7 3/4 x 7 5/8 in.
Frame size: 20 x 16 in.



Migrants, California, N.D.
Vintage gelatin silver print
Print size: 7 11/16 x 7 5/8 in.
Frame size: 20 x 16 in.



FSA (Squatting Man Rolling a Cigarette), N.D.
Vintage gelatin silver print
Print size: 9 5/8 x 7 5/8 in.
Frame size: 20 x 16 in.