



*Following the River*, 2013  
oil on polyester, 10 1/4 x 5 3/4 in. (26 x 14.6 cm)

# SANDRA MENDELSON RUBIN

## A Common Thread

18 February – 28 March 2015

Reception for the artist: Wednesday, 18 February 6-8 pm

**Venice, CA** -- L.A. Louver is pleased to present new landscape paintings by Sandra Mendelsohn Rubin in the exhibition "A Common Thread."

"For me, witnessing nature coming to life at the tip of my paintbrush is a humbling and moving experience. That being said, I think it is what you don't see that gives the paintings power." -- Sandra Mendelsohn Rubin

Painting from life, particularly landscape painting, has been central to Rubin's practice since the 1980s. In this new series of paintings created over the past three years, the artist has turned to digital photography as an added resource to survey the expansive scenery surrounding her Northern California home in rural Mendocino County. To depict these scenes from

an elevated perspective, Rubin has referenced photography shot from an airplane or micro-copter (a small remote controlled airborne device with a mounted camera), revealing vistas that would otherwise be inaccessible. Through this observation, she became fascinated in the human presence within the context of these environments, particularly natural and man-made bodies of water, a recurring theme in this exhibition. A precious yet dwindling resource vital to our existence, Rubin examines the subject of water as an extended meditation on its presence in everyday life.

"Following the River" (2013-14) portrays the Navarro River from above – its sinuous path carefully follows each bend of the landscape, while a nearby road cuts through without discretion. Also seen from above, "Irrigation Pond" (2013) features segmented sections of farmland with two ponds glistening like inlaid jewels amongst the fields. A slender panorama brings the viewer down to ground level in "Aqueduct at Quail Lake" (2015). In this scene, a small figure is silhouetted against a vast accumulation of water amidst dry, arid terrain.

"Studio in September" (2013) is the only painting that does not directly deal with water. Instead, the artist depicts the exterior of her studio at dusk. The dwindling daylight blankets the scene to quieting effect, while soft artificial light emanates from behind the studio windows. By angling the view from below, the structure seems to rise above the enveloping foliage like a refuge set apart from its dense bucolic surroundings.

Working primarily on a diminutive scale in this body of work, Rubin transforms these sprawling scenes into intimate encounters of intense focus. Requiring meticulous attention to detail, Rubin applies the oil paint undiluted and without glazes in successive layers to build the desired imagery. Irrespective of subject matter, it is the composite relationship between shape, color, texture and light to which Rubin gives her acute attentiveness and that forms the basis of her work. “However, in the end,” says Rubin, “intuition and memory are what shape and form each painting.”

Born and raised in Los Angeles, Sandra Mendelsohn Rubin studied art at the University of California, Los Angeles, and counts William Brice, James Doolin and James Valerio as primary influences. Graduating with a MFA in 1979, Rubin had already developed a distinctive landscape style that attracted early public attention and critical acclaim. In 1980, she received the Young Talent Purchase Award from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1981, and again in 1991, and more recently, a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2012. Rubin went on to expand her range of subjects to include still lifes and urban landscape scenes. The artist’s first solo show was held at L.A. Louver in 1982, and was followed by solo exhibitions at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Fischer Fine Art, London in 1985; Claude Bernard Gallery, New York in 1987; L.A. Louver in 1992, 2003, 2007, 2011; and Ameringer McEnery Yohe Gallery, New York in 2014.

Rubin’s paintings may be found in the permanent collections of Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, CA; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley, CA; Palm Springs Museum of Art, Palm Springs, CA; Cocker Art Museum, Sacramento, CA; Boise Art Museum, Boise, ID; Yale Art Museum, New Haven, CO; Louis-Dreyfus Family Collection, New York; the Eli Broad Collection, Los Angeles, CA; The Capital Group, Los Angeles, CA; and the Atlantic Richfield Company (ARCO), Los Angeles, CA.



*Studio in September, 2013*  
oil on polyester, 11 x 6 3/4 in. (27.9 x 17.1 cm)

**Concurrently on view:** 18 February – 28 March 2015

Ben Jackel: *American Imperium*

New clay and wood sculptures by the Los Angeles-based artist.