

# ANITA COOKE

## Strata

20February – 26March 2016

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JONATHAN FERRARA GALLERY is proud to announce *Strata*, an exhibition of new mixed-media paintings by artist **ANITA COOKE**. The exhibition will be on view in the main gallery from 20 February to 26 March with a *first Saturday artist reception* on **5 March from 6-9pm**. As a continuation of her body of work entitled *Dimensional Patterning*, Cooke's third solo exhibition at the gallery features the newest suite of her characteristic and labor-intensive, mixed-media, sewn canvas paintings, as well as, a new series of works with paper.

Cooke says of the exhibition . . .

*I use the term "Dimensional Patterning" to describe the building up of the surfaces in my work through the making, compiling, composing, and assembling of similar elements that are repeated in a quasi-ordered, patterned way. Large acrylic-painted canvases are cut into strips that are then pierced, cut, frayed, folded, torn, sewn and glued together into an array of loosely structured order. In my current body of work, the strips are positioned with edges facing front. These edges often have machine-created knots sewn directly on them numbering in the hundreds. These separate parts are amassed in multiples, which are then assembled, arranged and adhered to a backing.*

*Patterns consist of repeated elements: lines, shapes, colors and textures. These elements can be "patterned" and repeated endlessly with no one element being in the visual forefront with a discernible focal point, beginning, or end point. Because they can possess this quality of "the never-ending", patterns, then, can function to suggest or remind us of the incalculable, measureless space that surrounds us and that we are not usually concerned with or aware of in the routines of our daily lives. In the sewn canvas pieces titled "Strata," varied structured elements are stacked and layered many 'stories' high in laminated bands or tiers that are non-directional in nature. I am concerned with the notion of "core samples" (borrowing a term from scientific geologic exploration): which suggest that these works are perhaps just tiny slices, veins, cross-sections or samplings of some micro or macro whole and that also have an ambiguity of origin. I have always been interested in "what is on the inside"- and in what that interior core structure might look like or contain. The desire to look within, behind, and underneath and to question where a thing came from is paramount to human curiosity. Within the realm of this exposed core, there is hopefully revealed some essence or spirit and something of interest that invites meditation, contemplation and visual exploration.*

*The work titled "Strata: Golden Breath (mist, firelight)," portrays the continuum of the expansion and contraction that is inherent to living organisms.*

*In conjunction with the sewn canvas works, I am developing a series of works with paper. Large sections of paper are glued in multiple layers with acrylic gel and the surfaces purposely wrinkled or left to naturally buckle. Once dry, they are painted while lying flat on a table with numerous layers of acrylic paint, ceramic 'grog' and acrylic gel, and are then glued and stapled into place onto a canvas backing. The "WallStreet" and "WallWork" pieces often reference or are inspired by the aged and weathered exterior walls found all over New Orleans that speak to its long and layered history. The ephemeral, modulating, often precarious nature of the land and the city is referenced in "GroundWorks 1, 2 and 3," and in "Water Traces, Rivulets."*

Anita Cooke has lived and worked as an artist and teacher in New Orleans since 1980. She received her BFA in Ceramics from Kent State University in Ohio in 1978 and her MFA in Ceramics and Sculpture at Tulane



University in New Orleans in 1984. She has taught Ceramics at Tulane, Loyola University (in New Orleans), Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas, at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan and out of her own studio in New Orleans. Her twenty-eight foot long ceramic mural entitled “Lightsounds” can be seen on the campus of Western Michigan University. In 2005 Anita was a recipient of a Louisiana Fellowship Award. Most recently, her work was included in the 10-year Katrina Memorial exhibition *REVERB: Past, Present, Future* at the Contemporary Arts Center New Orleans curated by Isolde Brielmaier. Her works appears in numerous public and private collections including: Oil Tanking North America (Houston), Thomas and Dathel Coleman and Ralph and Susan Brennan.

For further information, press or sales inquiries please contact the gallery director, Matthew Weldon Showman, at [matthew@jonathanferraragallery.com](mailto:matthew@jonathanferraragallery.com) or at +1.504.522.5471.

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