

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Albertz Benda Presents  
*Ena Swansea: New Paintings*

On View October 27 – December 17, 2016  
515 West 26<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY

Opening Reception:  
Thursday, October 27, 6 – 8pm



Ena Swansea, *Snow on 16<sup>th</sup> Street*, 2015. oil, gouache and vinyl ink on metallic fabric, 90 x 120 inches.  
Private collection, Basel.

**New York, NY, June 9, 2016** – Albertz Benda is pleased to present *Ena Swansea: New Paintings*, the first exhibition at the gallery of American painter Ena Swansea, on view from October 27 to December 17, 2016. Expanding her formal and material vocabulary, Swansea has created a series of large-scale works that incorporate subtle themes from the recent history of painting.

The culmination of two years of intense experimentation, the exhibition premieres a series of new paintings that blur the distinction between abstraction and figuration. In a nod to Abstract Expressionism and the New York School, she works on a large scale and pushes descriptive images – snow laden branches, velvet curtains, brick facades -to their limit, manipulating the structures on the canvas.

When viewed from afar, the swathes of color and light on the monumental canvases coalesce into images of contemporary life in New York City, inspired by photographs that Swansea has taken. She creates spaces that are simultaneously ethereal in their shifting forms while remaining grounded in the atmosphere and symbols of the city. In *snow at night*, dark grey snow nearly erases the tree supporting it, while pools of fluorescent brick red hint at the presence of a building in the background.

**albertz benda**

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Swansea continually introduces effects normally associated with digital art and film and contrasts these elements with traditional painting techniques. She primes her canvas with a special graphite-mixture, which the artist, in collaboration with paint manufacturers, has developed over years. The reflective surface acts like a movie screen - the interplay between dull and glossy pigment application evokes a new image with every change of light. As in *happy valley*, where revelers appear to float in front of the picture plane, alternately emerging and sinking into shadow as in a subterranean nightclub. Combining realism and flowing fields of paint, a fresh approach emerges using a familiar set of materials.

Nothing in the paintings coheres in a way that could be reduced to a clear narrative or construed as allegory; Swansea's works are somewhere between projection and remembrance, a composite of private visions, film stills, and snapshots expertly rendered.

### About the Artist

Ena Swansea (b. 1966) lives and works in New York. Raised in North Carolina, Swansea studied film at the University of South Florida.

Her work has been exhibited extensively throughout the U.S. and internationally – Swansea was included in *Greater New York* at MoMA PS1 in 2005, and *The Triumph of Painting* at the Saatchi Gallery London in 2006. In 2008, she had her first museum survey at the Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg. In 2011, The Deichtorhallen Hamburg/Collection Falckenberg organized a two-person exhibition, *Psycho*, featuring forty of Swansea's paintings from European collections.

Swansea's work is included in numerous public collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Cornell University's Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Ithaca, NY; Boca Raton Museum of Art, Boca Raton, FL; Galerie Neue Meister/Albertinum Dresden, Germany; and Deichtorhallen, Sammlung Falckenberg, Hamburg. In 2001, Swansea received the Hassam, Speicher, Betts and Symons Purchase Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

### About Albertz Benda

Opened in Fall 2015, Albertz Benda is a gallery partnership between Thorsten Albertz and Marc Benda committed to presenting and nurturing a contemporary visual arts program, featuring a distinct roster of emerging and established artists.

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