



For Immediate Release

## Valerie Hegarty: *Elegies to the Environment*

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Booth A16

Burning in Water is pleased to feature a solo presentation of recent work by gallery artist **Valerie Hegarty**.

Valerie Hegarty is a Brooklyn-based artist who creates paintings, sculptures, and installations in mixed media. Hegarty has explored fundamental themes of American history throughout her career with a particular interest in the legacy of 19th-century American art, addressing topics such as colonization, slavery, Manifest Destiny, historical revisionism, nationalism, and environmental degradation in her work. Elaborating upon visual references to the art-historical canon of North America, Hegarty repurposes the ideological tenets of such works into a critical examination of the American legacy, artistic and otherwise. Cloaked within allusions to American classicism and evocations of the decorative and ornamental traditions, Hegarty's work consistently interrogates the darker ramifications of the American Experiment, from the environmental impact of expansionism to the conflicted and repressed dimensions of collective memory.



Valerie Hegarty, *5 Tulips with Wan Li Vase Elegy*, 2019, wood, canvas, wire, foil, epoxy clay, acrylic paint, 40 x 33 x 9 in. (101.6 x 83.8 x 22.9 cm.)



Valerie Hegarty, *Semper Augustus Tulip Elegy*, 2019, wood, wire, foil, epoxy clay, acrylic paint, 19 x 10.25 x 3.75 in. (48.3 x 26 x 9.5 cm.)

Valerie Hegarty's new series of wall works, *Elegies to the Environment*, explores the poetic possibilities of still life imagery. In the same way that an elegiac poem laments the dead, the works in *Elegies to the Environment* reference the art historical genre of *vanitas*, wherein symbolic works of art allude to the transience of life and the fleetingness of pleasure and material possessions.

Hegarty's recurring depiction of the striped tulip (*Semper Augustus*) in this series references the traditions of Dutch *vanitas* and still life painting, as well as the historical role of the highly prized flower during the Dutch Golden Age Tulip mania period. Hegarty's painting-sculpture hybrids constructed of wood, wire, and epoxy clay also recall the Japanese tradition of *Ikebana* ("arranging flowers", or "making flowers alive.")

Though Hegarty manifests the prototypical subject of flowers in varying iterations, she inscribes contemporary anxieties regarding environmental loss, genetic mutations, apocalyptic destruction, and illness into the works. Hegarty's art is not without a sense of hope, however—with roots spiraling out of frames and wooden stretcher bars transforming into rogue branches, stems, and tulips, her works transmute the dead to the living, resilience and survival persisting amidst the threat of destruction.

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**Valerie Hegarty (b. 1967, Burlington, VT)** is a Brooklyn-based artist whose work frequently employs critical engagement with American history and addresses themes of memory, place, and art historical legacy through painting, sculpture, and large-scale installations.

Previous solo exhibitions include *Burning in Water*, NY; *Burning in Water*, San Francisco; *Nicelle Beauchene*, NY; Marlborough Gallery, NY; Locust Projects, Miami; Museum 52, London; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; and Guild & Greyshkul, NY. She has completed public commissions for the High Line in NYC and the Brooklyn Museum. Hegarty's work is included in the permanent collections of the Brooklyn Museum, the Perez Art Museum Miami, the Saatchi Gallery, the New Britain Museum of American Art, the Portland Museum of Art, the Tang Museum, and the Wadsworth Atheneum.

Hegarty received her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and has received grants and awards from the Pollock Krasner Foundation, The New York Foundation for the Arts, the Rema Hort Mann Foundation, the Tiffany Foundation, and Campari NY. She has completed residences at LMCC, Marie Walsh Sharpe, PS 122, MacDowell, Yaddo, and Smack Mellon, and she served as the first Andrew W. Mellon Arts and the Common Good Artist-in-Residence at Drew University.

Her works have been cited in numerous publications, including *The New York Times*, *Artforum*, *Hyperallergic*, *American Art*, *Artnews*, and *ArtNet News*.

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**Burning in Water** is a New York-based gallery featuring an innovative curatorial program that highlights the work of living artists with reference to broader issues confronting society. Founded in 2015 by Dr. Barry Thomas Malin, the gallery's program conjoins a series of exhibitions by artists represented by the gallery with historical exhibitions of work by American and African artists.

The name of the gallery is drawn from a volume of poetry published by Charles Bukowski in 1963.

**Burning in Water**

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