

PRESS RELEASE

New York, December 19, 2024

JILL DOWNEN

Weightless

January 17 – March 15, 2025

Opening: Friday, January 17, 2025



“I draw with plaster and concrete to shape space that is resistance to naming, representation, or constraint. The space exists to open sensory experience in a mysterious way. The creative process involves ‘not knowing’ - a pathway that tells me I’m somewhere, but I’m unfamiliar with exactly where that is. I am in a state of being. The space holds a palpable presence. It feels like mist, a vast distance, breath, light resting in the air – weightless.”

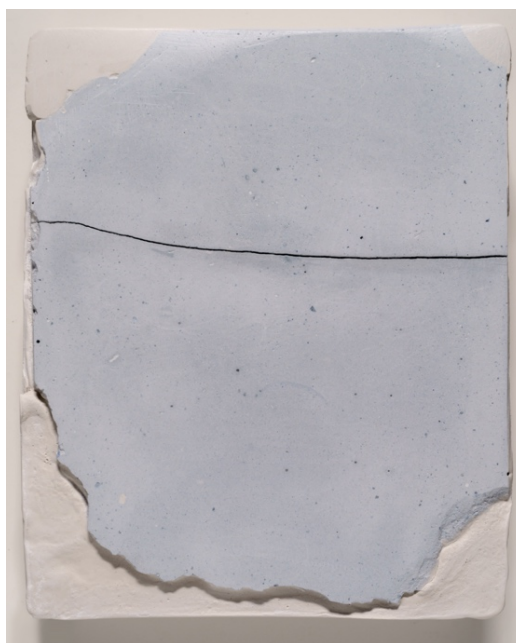
Nunu Fine Art New York is pleased to present *Weightless*, Jill Downen’s first solo exhibition with the gallery, with works spanning six years of the artist’s career. Downen (b.1967) is an American artist who currently lives and works in Kansas City. The exhibition will feature over thirty wall-hanging plaster and concrete works that Downen refers to as “reimagined drawings.”

Refined by decades of work with large-scale sculptural installations, Downen’s ‘drawings’ echo their architectural interventions through a reduced and sophisticated color palette, unconventional techniques, and their seasoned skills with plaster, concrete, lapis lazuli, and gold leaf. Each artwork is made with lath-and-plaster or metal mesh and concrete, evoking the traditional wall construction methods with common building materials. This reference to building alludes to Downen’s longstanding interest in architectural spaces and their psychological nature. A critical event in their formative years, a lightning strike to the family home, imprinted a heightened awareness of the body, architecture, and temporality that would, in time, inform the core of their artistic practice. Downen mines their own emotional capacities to draw out the materials’ potential, resulting in unique plaster textures and smooth concrete surfaces interrupted by discerning lapis lazuli inlays and gold-leafed contours emerging from the grayish-whitish ground base.



Each drawing creates its own abstract space, and together, they orchestrate a reflective and grounding environment conducive to observation and introspection. These spaces are dedicated to the renewal of balance, the recovery of the horizon, and the restoration of equilibrium. Downen's nuanced drawings invite us to cultivate our perception and contemplate with the hope of transcendence. The exhibition invites viewers to a haptic experience with spatial poetry, breathing in and out, to find respite in quiet subtlety. Their conceptual motivation addresses the need for quiet reflection in an uncertain world of rapid change.

Downen's work has been exhibited in numerous solo and group exhibitions at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR; Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, MO; Oklahoma City Museum of Art, OK; Rosenberg Gallery | Hofstra University, NY; Brooks Museum of Art, Memphis, TN; Louisiana State University Museum of Art, Baton Rouge, LA; University of North Texas, Denton, TX; The Arsenal of Venice, Italy; and Artscape Commons, Toronto, Canada; amongst others. Her residencies include Art Omi: Artists, MASS MoCA, the MacDowell Colony National Endowment for the Arts residency, and Cité International des Arts residency in Paris, France. They are a recipient of the Guggenheim Fellowship, the Stone and DeGuire Contemporary Art Award, and the Charlotte Street Foundation Visual Artists Award. Downen is the Chair of Sculpture at the Kansas City Art Institute.



An opening reception will be held on Friday, January 17th, 2025. The artist will be present.

ABOUT NUNU FINE ART

Founded in 2014 by international art dealer Nunu Hung, Nunu Fine Art presents a cross section of both emerging and established artists. The first contemporary art gallery in Taipei with a broadly multicultural outlook, Nunu Fine Art combines an innate sensitivity to Asia's cultural heritage with seasoned insight into the global contemporary art scene. The gallery's multifaceted program includes both solo and group exhibitions by a wide range of artists from the Americas, Europe, and Asia. As a platform for multidisciplinary storytelling, Nunu Fine Art is committed to offering educational events and publications in tandem with its artistic projects.

In April 2023, Nunu Hung inaugurated a second gallery space, at 381 Broome Street, becoming the first Taiwanese gallery to expand its program to New York City. More recently, the NYC gallery expanded to include a lower-level project space designed to challenge and redefine conventional notions of exhibition while pushing the boundaries of artistic exploration.

IMAGE CAPTIONS

Jill Downen, *Plaster Wall Drawing 1 (detail)*, 2019-2023, plaster, lapis lazuli, on wood lath 72 x 48 x 2 in

Jill Downen, *Mysterious Textures of the Utmost Height (2)*, 2024, concrete, gold leaf, 10 x 8 in

Jill Downen, *Cracked Air*, 2024, plaster, powdered lapis lazuli, 10 x 8 in

MEDIA CONTACT

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NUNU FINE ART NEW YORK

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