

Paintings & Works on Paper:

Isabel Riley's mixed media works on paper channel the language of the subconscious, carving space between the physical world and the unseen. Sites of both invention and excavation, the surfaces are actively built up and scrubbed down as the artist searches for dynamic color combinations and rhythms within abstract forms. Riley allows the works to develop through the freedom of instinct, working in the spirit of Surrealism and André Breton's philosophy of automatic writing. Often in these works, organic networks and infrastructures emerge through geometric drawing lines, evoking spider webs and molecular structures as well as man-made systems like highways, bridges, and train routes. These networks double as foregrounded thresholds to imagined landscapes; windows that simultaneously obscure, fragment, and reveal what lies beyond. Enchantment arises in these liminal moments as the viewer stands with one's feet in reality while peering into the depths of a dream space.

Sculpture:

Through fragments of urbanized landscapes, Isabel Riley constructs otherworldly artifacts imbued with the unknown histories of found objects. Pieces of textile, metal, plastic, wood, shell, glitter and other detritus are embedded in masonry to create totemic amalgamations of time, a merging of worlds. Riley is inspired by the presence of ancient and modern ruins within today's society—the shards of antiquity lying in plain sight. These forgotten architectures seem to hold an omniscient knowledge of the past. Riley's sculptures play on this sense of mystery through a diversity of surfaces and patinas, such as rust, that carry the visual implication of time passing. As always, elements of fiction combine with the familiar, alluding to the magic amidst our daily existence.