



**CLAIRE OLIVER GALLERY PRESENTS LAUREN FENSTERSTOCK:
*SOME LANDS ARE MADE OF LIGHT***

November 14, 2024 - January 18, 2025



OCTOBER 31, 2024 - New York, NY | Claire Oliver Gallery is proud to announce *Some Lands Are Made of Light*, a solo exhibition of new intimately-scaled sculptures and jewel encrusted drawings by Lauren Fensterstock. In response to our current climate of political polarization and social upheaval, Fensterstock seeks to create works that offer moments of reflection and inner peace. Believing that each person can be an agent for positive change—within themselves, their community, and the greater universe—she uses her devout meditation practice as an entry point for these new works. *Some Lands Are Made of Light* offers viewers a space to contemplate and reflect within the organic and spectral frameworks embodied by her sculptures and small-scale charcoal and embedded Swarovski crystal works on paper. A year in the making, this new exhibition features 30 new artworks on view in New York City, November 14, 2024 - January 18, 2025.

Fensterstock's latest works are inspired by the South Asian religious and artistic practice of creating mandalas, sacred symbols of the universe, and transforming these emblems into elaborate, jewel-like creations.

"I see my work as jewelry but not to adorn the body, but rather augment the soul," states Fensterstock. "I invite viewers to pause and reflect on their place within a collective experience, and embrace their perceived imperfections—acknowledging that our differences, flaws, and struggles are what make us uniquely human."

Each sculpture is a harmonious assemblage of repurposed treasures: natural crystals, quartz, chandelier parts, glass, Swarovski crystals, and antique beads, coming together to form wild lotus flowers, exploding planets, stars, and suns. Fensterstock transforms these disparate elements into iconic yet malleable emblems of transformation, scaled into intimate offerings. Her lotuses burst, curl, crackle, and shatter; in one piece, her natal constellations are mapped in glistening, starlike gems, while in another, the flower's bulb takes the shape of a swirling, cavernous black hole.

The balanced contrast of light and darkness in Fensterstock's work oscillates between sensations of clarity and mystery, miniature and monumental, embodiment and expansion. Each work begins with an ink drawing. From there, she constructs wood and steel frameworks, coats them in cement, adorns them with intricate mosaics, and finishes them with mortar and grout. Like assembling a puzzle infused with spiritual wonder, Fensterstock designs her mosaics piece by piece, each detail imbued with intuition, contemplation, and care.

The exhibition's title is inspired by *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, also known as the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, a foundational Buddhist text that explores universal liberation through symbols, structures, and sacraments. Mirroring her daily meditation practice—where she carefully places gem-like offerings onto a convex metal tray, letting each stone fall into her lap to form a singular mandala—every shard in her sculptures represents a moment of presence, a convergence of people, places, histories, and materials.

In a culture that often emphasizes isolation and individualism, Fensterstock hopes her work will remind viewers of the intimate flickers of connection that, together, form brilliant beams of light.

ABOUT LAUREN FENSTERSTOCK

Lauren Fensterstock is an artist living and working in Portland, Maine. Fensterstock received her BFA from Parsons School of Design in 1997 and her MFA from SUNY New Paltz in 2000. She has had recent solo exhibitions at the Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, VA; Claire Oliver Gallery, New York, NY; John Michael Kohler Art Center, Sheboygan, WI; The Museum of Contemporary Art Jacksonville, Jacksonville, FL; and the Lupin Foundation Gallery at the University of Georgia, Athens, GA; among others. Her work is included in the public collections of the Museum of

Contemporary Art, Jacksonville, FL; Portland Museum of Art, Portland, ME; Wichita Art Museum, Wichita, KS; Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, VA; Weisman Art Museum, Minneapolis, MN; Farnsworth Art Museum, Rockland, ME; Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, IA; Museum of Glass, Tacoma, WA; Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, ME; Wheaton College, Norton, MA; Tiffany & Co, New York, NY; University of Maine Museum of Art, Orono, ME; among others. Fensterstock is also a 2016 United States Artist Fellow.

IMAGE CAPTIONS (L-R):

Lauren Fensterstock, *Tender Nihilation*, 2024, 16 x 20 x 20 in. Courtesy of Claire Oliver Gallery

Lauren Fensterstock, *I arrange the stars*, 2024, 14 x 22 x 19 in. Courtesy of Claire Oliver Gallery

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ABOUT CLAIRE OLIVER GALLERY

Claire Oliver Gallery is located in Central Harlem in a four-story brownstone. For nearly 25 years, Claire Oliver Gallery has showcased and celebrated artwork, with a focus on work by women and people of color, which transcends and challenges the traditional art historical canon. The gallery's forward-thinking program and exclusive commitment to the primary market allows for an intensive focus that has nurtured and grown the careers of our artists. Many of the gallery's artists have been included in The Venice Biennale, The Whitney Biennial, and biennales in Sydney, Pittsburgh, and Lyon and have exhibited works in major international museums including the Smithsonian American Art Museum, The Art Institute of Chicago, Centre Georges Pompidou, The Philadelphia Museum of Art, and The Los Angeles County Museum of Art amongst others. Claire Oliver Gallery artists are included in the permanent collections of many important museums worldwide including The Smithsonian American Art Museum, The Art Institute of Chicago, The Tate Britain, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The State Hermitage Museum, MoMA, and the Museum of Arts and Design amongst many others. Claire Oliver Gallery held the first American exhibition for the Russian collaborative AES+F, whose work went on to twice represent Russia in the Russian pavilion of the Venice Biennale. Gallery artists have received

prestigious fellowships including Fulbright, Guggenheim, USArtist and National Endowment for the Arts.

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