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MAKE ROOM LOS ANGELES HOSTS WINTER GROUP SHOW URBAN WHISPERS OPENING DECEMBER 2021

Featuring artists from a variety of international cities, the show presents artwork as representations of urban legends, functioning as both stories and love letters to cities.

Make Room Los Angeles is pleased to announce a two-chapter group exhibition, *Urban Whispers*. The first phase of the show— in collaboration with WOAW Gallery— will open at WOAW's Queen's Road Central location in Hong Kong on 16 December. The second phase will open at Make Room's Melrose Avenue location on 18 December, corresponding with an artist's Christmas Market that will be held in the gallery's courtyard.

In Italo Calvino's 1972 novel *Invisible Cities*, the Venetian explorer Marco Polo meets with Kublai Khan to describe the wonders that he has seen on his travels. As his stories of cities and people unfurl, it becomes apparent to the reader that Polo's urban landscapes are fabrications of his imagination, each one serving as a poem, parable, or moral tale rather than a description of a real place. Calvino presents to the reader the city as its own urban legend, and within the fictional cities such as Zora, Maurilia, or Ersilia, one can find kernels of truth of what it really means to be a city dweller.

Urban legends are the tools used to make sense of the intense, absurd reality of city living. In *Urban Whispers*, artists from a variety of urban environments explore visual interpretations of urban myth as it applies to their practice. From hyper-urban scenes to delicate, pastoral fantasies, the show shines a light on the ways in which we process living in a completely fabricated— and completely human— environment. Collectively, these stories we tell are also our love letters to cities we inhabit.

The second phase of *Urban Whispers* features work by a variety of artists working in cities around the world, including Los Angeles, Vancouver, New York, Miami, and San Francisco.

Shana Hoehn's freestanding sculptures and Antonia Kuo and Weston Uram's wall works carve out intimacy within the visual collapse of space, evoking the rush of urban living; The canvases of Bix Archer and Jessica Taylor Bellamy find an intersection between the nostalgia of memory and the pessimism of modern existence; Michelle Blade and Guimi You's paintings interrogate the presence of humanity within a natural environment, carving out the personal within the urban. Chad Murray's incisive works investigate and lampoon the nature of objects and their dual role as objects of global capital and private use. Miranda Byk's surrealistic works on canvas highlight the effects of daydream, ennui, and detachment on the urban mind. And the works of Dan Herschlein, Xin Liu, and Lee Pivnik betray an immense fascination with the inner workings of natural and manmade systems, interrogating and toying with the role of humanity's own structures within the planet and the universe.

In *Invisible Cities*, Marco Polo relays to Kublai Khan the following: “Cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears, even if the thread of their discourse is secret, their rules are absurd, their perspectives deceitful, and everything conceals something else.”¹ The artists of *Urban Whispers* take these dreams and allow them to blossom, creating visual worlds in which the substantive matter of cities and their stories are explored as if anew.

¹ Calvino, Italo. *Invisible Cities*. New York: Mariner Books, 1972. p. 44.