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Becca Smith

November 20, 2014 – January 10, 2015

Opening reception, Friday, November 21, 6-8PM

Rebecca Smith's exhibition, *Atmosphere*, synthesizes her ongoing formal and material interest in painting and sculpture with the hot-button issue of global warming, which, as Smith sets out to show, is an atmospheric phenomenon occurring on the molecular level. Here, Smith attempts to visualize the atmosphere and its gaseous composition in a range of scales using a variety of media engaging ideas such as the phenomenology of sculpture, the relationship of painting to sculpture, and how to picture the invisible.

Five molecule sculptures, hybrid works that shift between two and three-dimensions, stasis and movement, and sculpture and painting, represent three greenhouse gases responsible for global warming: carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide. Each is composed of one or more shapes cut from honeycomb aluminum panels on which the artist has applied solvent dyes; different colors correspond to different elements (carbon is black and oxygen is blue, for example). The molecular symbols, rendered as shaped metal paintings/sculptures, are balanced on pipes capped off with actual natural gas valves. They suggest that the overabundance of greenhouse gas molecules are the result of our fossil fuel consumption.

Other wall-bound sculptures in *Atmosphere* reveal a playfulness and a resourceful use of materials as both anchoring devices and formal elements. In *Flower Power* (2014), Smith deftly "draws" shapes in painted curved steel, balancing layers of the metal composition on re-purposed ash hammer handles that have been painted bright red, not only providing stability for the sculpture, but creating compositional punctuation marks as well.

Two airy sculptures, made of colored string that suspend grids of painted steel lattice just a few inches above the floor, allude to weightlessness and balance. The former we might associate with the upper atmosphere on the threshold of space and the latter a condition increasingly precarious as the alarm of global warming becomes ever more deafening. The combination of string and metal lattice brings to mind a drawing in three dimensions as vertical lines converse with the horizontal, ribbon-like steel elements. Sculptural buoyancy is further emphasized through Smith's use of iridescent interference paint, which, in a chameleon-like manner, changes color depending on how light interacts with the surface and the viewer's angle of vision when encountering the work.

Rebecca Smith (b. 1954) has had solo exhibitions at the New York Studio School, New York, NY; Hionas Gallery, New York, NY; Tarrawarra Museum of Art, Healesville, Australia; Picker Art Gallery, Colgate University, Hamilton, NY; Jeannie Freilich Fine Art, New York, NY; Florence Lynch Gallery, New York, NY; and Lamont Gallery, Phillips Exeter Academy, Exeter, NH, among others. She has been featured in group exhibitions at Great Hall Gallery, Cooper Union, New York, NY; Janet Kurmtowski Gallery, Brooklyn, NY; Heskin Contemporary, New York, NY; Five Myles, Brooklyn, NY; Atlanta Contemporary Art Center, Atlanta, GA; Mead Art Museum at Amherst College, Amherst, MA; Abington Art Center, Abington, PA; Plattsburgh State Art Museum Sculpture Park, Plattsburgh, NY, and Fine Arts Center Galleries, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI, among others. Her work is in the collections of Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY; Hyde Collection, Glens Falls, NY; Picker Art Gallery, Colgate University, Hamilton, NY; and the Tarrawarra Museum, Healesville, Australia. Smith attended Sarah Lawrence College and the New York Studio School.