

# Regolith

Jess Willa Wheaton

September 5 to October 4, 2014

Opening Friday, September 5, 7pm



*Hot Tears*, Jess Willa Wheaton, 2014,  
found images, glue, 19 x 25 cm

As first defined by American geologist George P. Merrill in 1897: "This entire mantle of unconsolidated material, whatever its nature or origin, it is proposed to call the regolith." (Merrill, G.P., *Rocks, rock-weathering and soils*. New York: MacMillan Company, 1897, 411p)

Named for the Greek words *rhegos* (blanket) and *lithos* (rock), Earth's regolith can be nearly absent or hundreds of meters in thickness. It may be initially produced by processes nearby, or far away, or both, and its age can range from instantaneous to hundreds of millions of years old. The presence of this unconsolidated topcoat is an important factor for most life.

With *Regolith*, Wheaton continues to plumb the possibilities of pictorial surface tension, while considering the mobility of the veneer of the Earth. In her latest collages, found images are re-inscribed with meaning by the context of their composition. Implicit to these works' surfaces are strenuous compressions, tight fits orchestrated over eons, quick breaks, slowly drifting layers and sudden suspensions. Also employing these processes are paintings, many of them the largest she has exhibited to date. While continuing to enfold found images, here the process of painting generates the forces and content of earthly activity. History, tumult, growth and light spread, contract and transform each surface into a new spatial state, depending on location.

Jess Willa Wheaton grew up in California and lives and works in New York City. She received a Certificate in Visual Arts from Camosun College, a BFA from the California College of the Arts and an MFA from Hunter College in 2013. In the past year her work has been exhibited at Zusi Graham, Cologne, Germany and in several group exhibitions in New York. Wheaton gratefully acknowledges the support of Camosun College, where she is the current Artist in Residence for 2014.

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