

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OOLONG GALLERY presents

Amy Pachowicz *Gilded Age*

February 7 – March 10, 2025

Opening Reception: February 7, 6–8 PM

Gallery Hours: Wednesday – Saturday, 11 AM – 5 PM

Appointments advised: info@oolonggallery.com | +1 858 229 2788

Oolong Gallery is pleased to present *Gilded Age*, a solo exhibition by San Diego-based artist Amy Pachowicz. Through a series of evocative botanical paintings and large and small-scale collages, Pachowicz explores themes of nostalgia, impermanence, desire, opulence and the dissonance between personal memory and the larger world's turbulence.

Pachowicz's delicate botanical renderings depict fragments of life—branches, feathers, and leaves—suspended in rich fields of color, relics of the natural world that once pulsed with vitality but now exist as remnants of what was. The artist grapples with the tension between artistic creation and the realities of global suffering, reflecting on what it means to live and create amid conflict and loss.

"I hang bundles of cut plants in my studio: flowers, sage, my neighbors weeds that grew four feet high. I dry them, sketch them and draw them in a large format. I draw them alone against a background of color. These are large scale oil stick drawings of relics suspended in space; remnants of the life that once flowed through them."

Her collages, constructed from carefully sourced print media spanning the 1960s through the 1980s, are deeply personal yet universally resonant. Drawing from childhood encyclopedias, vintage magazines, and family ephemera—including materials from her father's career as a traveling encyclopedia salesman—Pachowicz weaves together a visual narrative of a world once filled with analog wonder, before the digital age redefined the way we consume imagery and knowledge. The muted tones and textures of these compositions stand in stark contrast to the oversaturated, pixelated media landscape of today.

"I compile collages of print media from my childhood and nostalgic images I've collected. 1980's Penthouse, our family encyclopedia set (my father was a traveling encyclopedia salesman back in the 70's), teen beat magazines and Charlie's Angels posters, my grandmother's Betty Crocker cookbook; the things of a girl growing up in a previous era of California, all make it into the collages. I remember a time when printed media had a feeling of value. I grew up reading books

and playing in canyons, feeling grass and sun and skinned knees on concrete. The digital age and computerized images are different.

Color pictures from the 1967 encyclopedia Britannica are rich and soft; nuanced teals, magentas, mint greens and lilacs entertained me. Color photos today are full of primary reds, blues and yellows. I glance and look away. It must have something to do with a change in printing and inks. The encyclopedia I looked at as a child also had black and white images of far off places. A distant island, an uninhabited beach, an arctic glacier photographed in a way where it looked like an explorer was approaching for the first time; discovering a new land. Today the world feels overexposed from digital advertising.”

Amy Pachowicz (born 1968) is a born and raised San Diego artist working with themes of nostalgia and nature. She studied archaeology and graduated from UCSD in 1996 with a minor in studio painting following a year at Barnard College, Columbia University, NY.

Pachowicz’s practice is informed by an early academic foundation in archaeology, a discipline that continues to shape her exploration of artifacts—whether organic or printed—as vessels of memory and meaning. Her work has been exhibited at Oolong Gallery in Encinitas, juried exhibitions at the Athenaeum in La Jolla, and numerous group shows across San Diego since the late 1990s, including ICE Gallery in 2002.

Join us for the opening reception on February 7 from 6–8 PM. For inquiries and previews, please contact +1 858 229 2788 | info@oolonggallery.com

Notes on the artworks:

The exhibition Amy Pachowicz *Gilded Age* at Oolong Gallery explores themes of memory, identity, and humanity’s evolving relationship with nature and culture. Her botanical works—*Feather, Ironwood, and Brown Sage*—capture fleeting life, loss, and resilience through delicate yet forceful depictions of natural remnants. These pieces emphasize a direct experience of nature, unmediated by digital or secondhand perception.

Her large-scale collages, including *Farrah I, Farrah II, and Farrah III*, layer vintage media, childhood memorabilia, and historical references, deconstructing the ways in which identity, femininity, and Western narratives have been shaped by visual culture. Drawing from Victorian encyclopedias, 1960s and 70s magazines, and personal artifacts, Pachowicz questions how past biases, consumerism, and nostalgia intertwine to influence our understanding of history and selfhood.

Textile-based works such as *Durga* and *Mountains* incorporate pattern as a symbol of status, repetition, and control. In *Durga*, an abstraction of an Indian textile, the Hindu goddess emerges, embodying destruction and liberation from material constraints. Meanwhile, *Mountains* juxtaposes human-imposed order with an imagined Earth untouched by consciousness, a reflection on nature's existence beyond human intervention.

In *Dark Sun*, Pachowicz references medieval alchemy manuscripts, lost languages, and ancient symbols, exploring the human need to define, categorize, and seek meaning. Similarly, *Girl* contrasts representations of women—innocence and objectification, nature and culture—through collected imagery and personal sketches.

Her gestural female portraits, derived from 70s and 80s Penthouse models, examine the interplay of the male gaze, female sexuality, and visual storytelling. Simultaneously playful and critical, these pieces capture fleeting moments, nostalgia, and a fascination with surfaces, fabrics, and adornment.

Throughout the show *Gilded Age*, Pachowicz reflects on impermanence, memory, and the constructed nature of reality, questioning how we perceive history, beauty, and truth in an era of relentless image saturation.