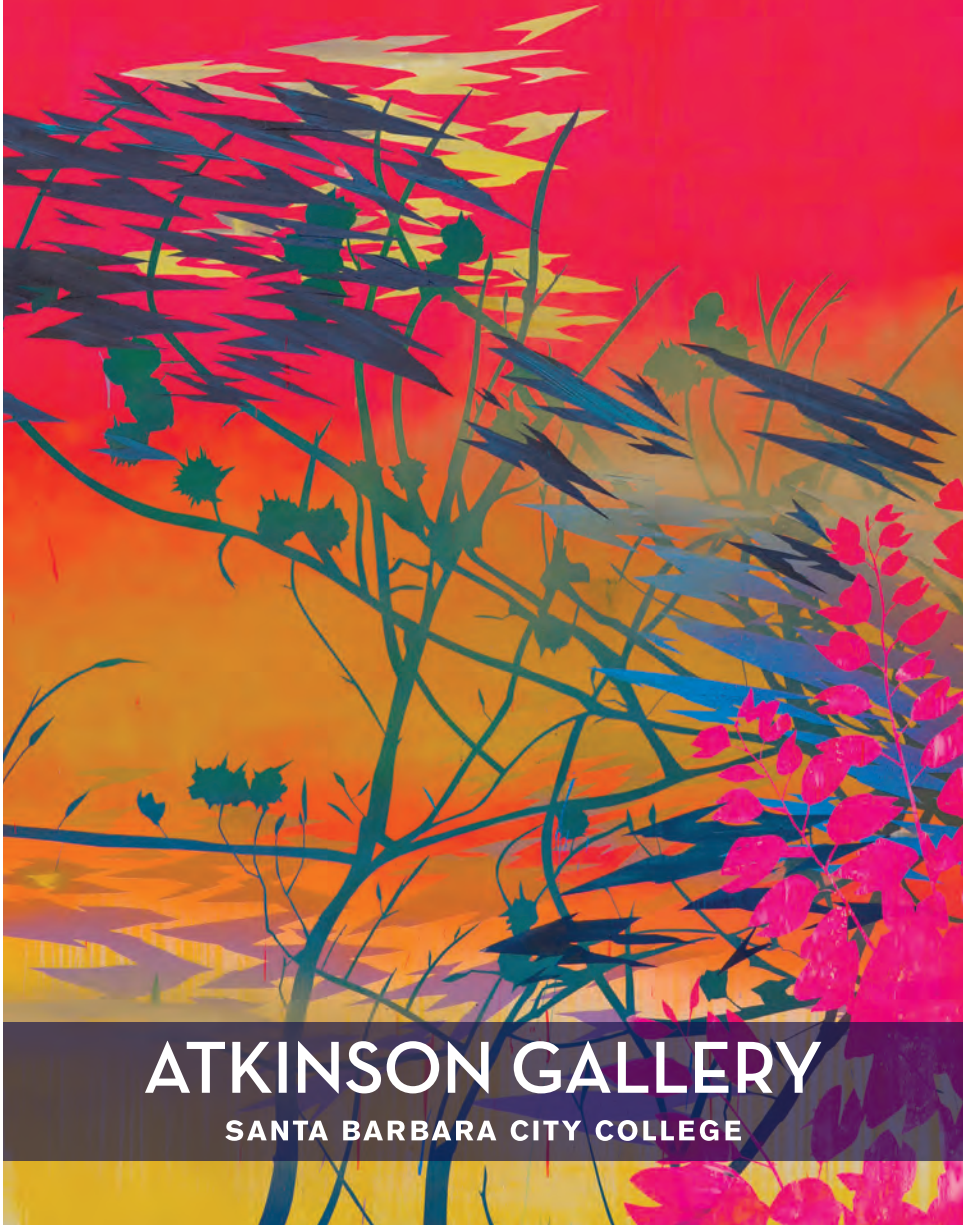


# DEVON TSUNO

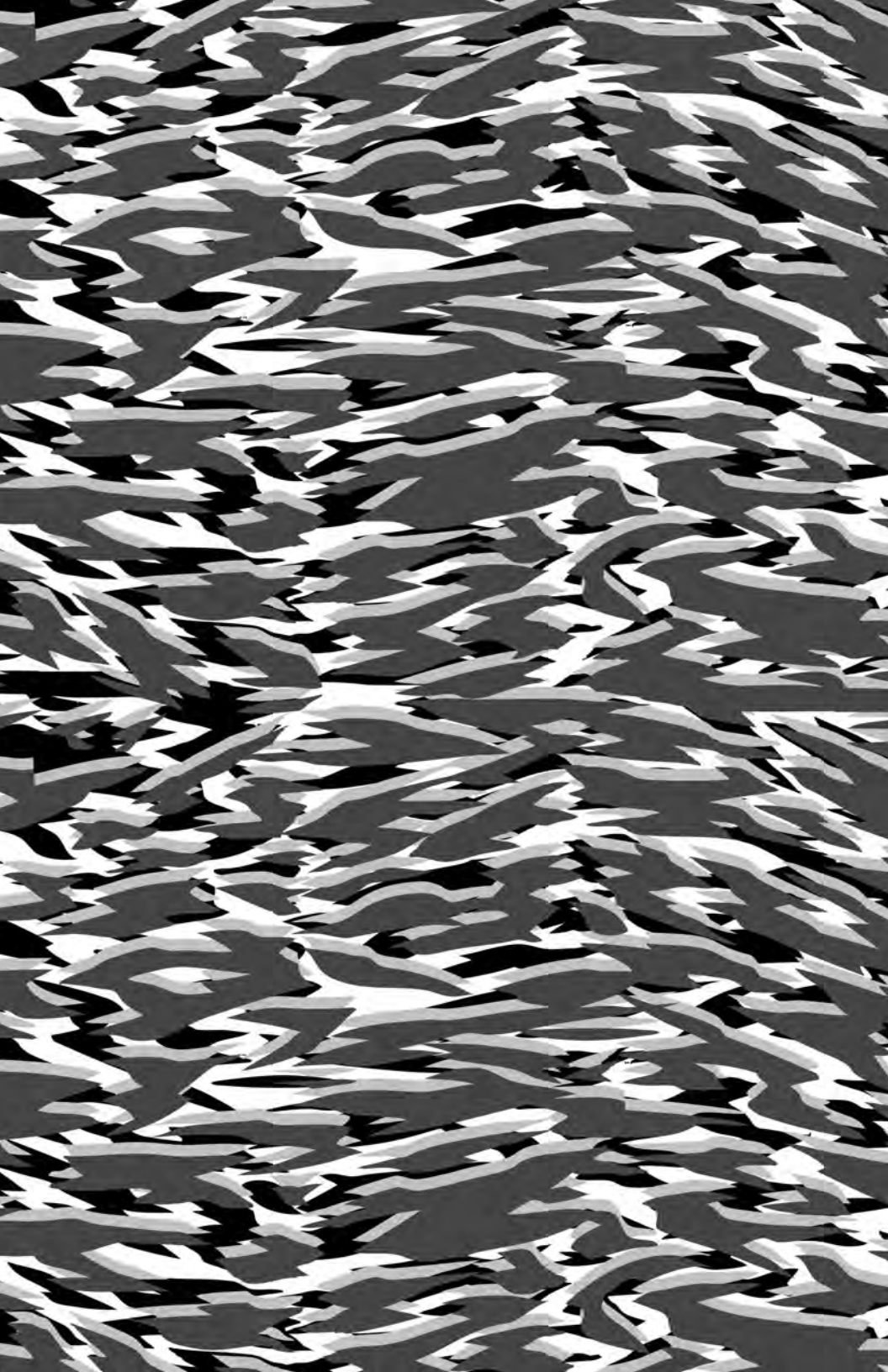
Los Angeles River: Urban Reclamation

September 16 - December 2, 2016



ATKINSON GALLERY

SANTA BARBARA CITY COLLEGE



# DEVON TSUNO

Los Angeles River: Urban Reclamation



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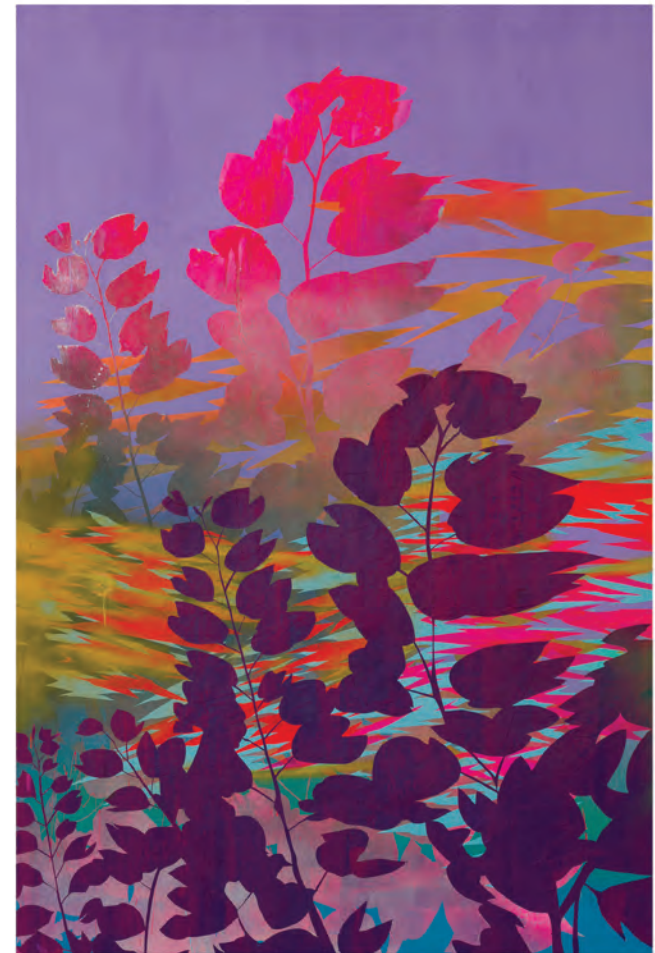
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# DEVON TSUNO

## Los Angeles River: Urban Reclamation



**A**rtist Devon Tsuno's native habitat is the Los Angeles River watershed. Even more than streets or buildings, a water catchment defines livable space for plants and animals (including humans), especially here in the arid Southern Californian climate. In the *Los Angeles River: Urban Reclamation* exhibition, Tsuno, an avid fisherman, shares his embedded perspective from the place where land and water meet rather than an aerial view of the entire watershed. Tsuno often works on a massive scale, creating paintings that are 9 feet tall and installations that cover multiple walls of the gallery, however his images are always tightly cropped. This consistent use of close-ups accentuates Tsuno's practice of painting through his camera's lens while creating an immersive immediacy.



While rooted in lifelong observation, Tsuno's abstract landscapes are synthetic—anomalously colored composites of multiple sites that meld actual places together into a conceptual whole. In a densely layered build-up of acrylic and spray paint, Tsuno superimposes one plant on top of another, tangibly mirroring the cumulative ecology of his hometown watershed in which native and non-native plants vie for position. Even as each new coat of paint supersedes the last, the underlying silhouettes remain palpable, never totally erased. Furthermore, his fluorescent tones simultaneously celebrate the vitality of Southern California 1980's popular culture and serve as an acrid expression of the toxic and polluted environment.

The 834 square mile Los Angeles River watershed, home to 9 million people, is a fluid ecosystem. Accordingly, Tsuno's repeated water images flow across every media and surface—sumi ink on handmade paper, spray paint on canvas, and thousands of photocopies stapled to the wall. As the water imagery permeates the architectural space, it becomes impossible to ignore the intrinsic relationship between the constructed and natural environments. Like the watershed, the human ecology of Los Angeles is a dynamic ebb and flow of many indigenous and immigrant cultures. Similarly, Tsuno's current studio in the converted living room of his childhood home reflects this complex layering.



Now installed in Santa Barbara, this exhibit invites local residents to consider their own relationships to the catchments on the Central Coast, most immediately the Mission Creek and Arroyo Burro watersheds. While there are many shared cultural and ecological characteristics between Santa Barbara and Los Angeles, Tsuno's work underscores the importance of developing an engaged and critical connection to the place in which we live—wherever that may be.

—Sarah Cunningham, Atkinson Gallery Director  
September 2016

# Work List

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*Invasive Horticulture*, spray paint acrylic on canvas, 108" x 216", 2015, Photograph courtesy of Elon Schoenholz (Middle panel-Front Cover)

*Watershed Duplication*, photocopies, variable size, 2015 (Page 2)

*Submerged Palm*, spray paint and acrylic on handmade paper, 30" x 23", 2014 (Page 3)

*Grey Water*, spray paint and acrylic on handmade paper, 30" x 23", 2014 (Page 4)

*Watershed No. 12*, monotype screenprint, 30" x 22", 2015, Printed at Press Works (Top-Right, Page 5, not exhibited)

*Watershed No. 2*, monotype screenprint, 30" x 22", 2015, Printed at Press Works (Top-Middle, Page 5)

*Watershed No. 5*, monotype screenprint, 30" x 22", 2015, Printed at Press Works (Top-Left, Page 5)

*Watershed No. 4*, monotype screenprint, 30" x 22", 2015, Printed at Press Works (Bottom-Right, Page 5)

*Watershed No. 22*, monotype screenprint, 30" x 22", 2015, Printed at Press Works (Bottom-Middle, Page 5)

*Watershed No. 25*, monotype screenprint, 30" x 22", 2015, Printed at Press Works (Bottom-Left, Page 5)

*Invasive Horticulture*, spray paint acrylic on canvas, 108" x 216", 2015, Photograph courtesy of Elon Schoenholz (Pages 6-7)

*Reclaimed Water 1*, sumi ink and spray paint on handmade paper, 16" x 12", 2015 (Left, Page 8)

*Watershed 3*, spray paint and acrylic on handmade paper, 16" x 12", 2015 (Right, Page 8)

*Watershed 1*, spray paint and acrylic on handmade paper, 16" x 12", 2015 (Bottom, Page 8)

*Reclaimed Water 4*, sumi ink and spray paint on handmade paper, 16" x 12", 2015 (Left, Page 9, not exhibited)

*Watershed 2*, spray paint and acrylic on handmade paper, 16" x 12", 2015 (Right, Page 9)

*Invasive Horticulture*, spray paint acrylic on canvas, 108" x 216", 2015, Photograph courtesy of Elon Schoenholz (Left panel-Back Cover)

## About the Gallery

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Santa Barbara City College's Atkinson Gallery produces exhibitions of contemporary art featuring international, national, regional and student artists working in a wide range of styles and media. Established in 1975, the gallery reopened in its sleekly renovated 850 square foot permanent home in the Humanities Building in 2014. The Atkinson Gallery is your learning laboratory, an educational resource that engages with students, faculty, and community members through exhibitions and educational programs.



**D**evon Tsuno is a Los Angeles-native. His abstract paintings, socially engaged projects, artist books and print installations focus on the LA watershed, water use, and native vs. non-native vegetation. Tsuno is a 2017 Santa Fe Art Institute Water Rights Artist-In-Residence, is the 2016 SPART Community Grantee and was awarded a 2014 California Community Foundation Fellowship for Visual Art. Tsuno's long-term interest in bodies of water in the LA area has been central to his work with the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, Big City Forum, Theodore Payne Foundation, the grantLOVE Project, and Occidental College. Tsuno has exhibited at the Hammer Museum Venice Beach Biennial, Current: LA Water Public Art Biennial, the U.S. Embassy in New Zealand, Indianapolis Museum of Contemporary Art, and Roppongi 605 in Tokyo. His solo exhibition, *Reclaimed Water* was identified in *art ltd.* as a *Critic's Picks: 2014 Top 10* exhibitions in LA and his exhibition *Watershed* curated by Andrea Stang was reviewed in *Artillery Magazine* and *Notes on Looking*. Tsuno earned an MFA from Claremont Graduate University in 2005 and a BFA from California State University Long Beach in 2003. He is currently an Assistant Professor of Art and Design at California State University, Dominguez Hills.



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