

Esther Pearl Watson

Born 1973 in Frankfurt, Germany; Lives and works in Los Angeles

Esther Pearl Watson, who is based in California, grew up in a series of small towns outside of Dallas, Texas, with her siblings, mother, and flying saucer-building father, Gene. Her father's flying saucers and the nomadic aspects of her childhood inspire her "memory paintings," which playfully narrate the experience of an economically precarious family living in rural America. Watson's work highlights an absurd, persistent, and particularly American optimism that only seems to grow stronger in the face of failures of family, policy, and the American Dream. Watson's paintings depict farmland and highways, oil rigs and payday loan storefronts, playgrounds and parking lots, each with a brief memory written in the corner of the painting to describe the scene. All the while, glittering flying saucers dot the sky and the children, usually pictured in something of a cheerful tumble, seem to be the ones narrating the text as if recollecting the facts years later.

Esther Pearl Watson has an MFA from CalArts. Her paintings have been exhibited worldwide, including at the Amon Carter Museum of American Art. Her award-winning comic "Unlovable" is published in Bust Magazine and with Fantagraphics. She has published *Blood Lady Commandos* on Vice online and *Welcome to Crapland* on Adult Swim online. She has taught at Oxbow Artist Residency, The Lexicon of Sexicana at Columbia College in Chicago, and Artist-in-Residence at Grafikiens Hus in Mariefred, Sweden, and the Pasadena Art Center College of Design.

EDUCATION

2012 MFA, California Institute of the Arts

1995 BFA, Art Center College of Design

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2026

Esther Pearl Watson: Celestial Road Trip, Vielmetter, Los Angeles, CA

2024

Esther Pearl Watson: Generating Auras, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York, NY

2023

At Heaven's Edge: Visions, Museum Krona, Uden, Netherlands

Starship Pegasus, Antonio Colombo Gallery, Milan, Italy

Sightings, Sun Valley Museum of Art, Ketchum, ID

Space Gas, Webb Gallery, Waxahachie, TX

Esther Pearl Watson: A Very Luminous Vision, Vielmetter, Los Angeles, CA

2022

Esther Pearl Watson: Guardian of Eden, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York, NY

Esther Pearl Watson: An Apparent Brightness, Maureen Paley, Marina Di Luna, Hove, UK

The Magical Mystery Tour Returns, Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

2021

Esther Pearl Watson, Safer at Home: Pandemic Paintings, Richmond Center for Visual Arts, Western Michigan University, MI

Esther Pearl Watson: Greenhouse, Vielmetter Los Angeles, CA

Dust It Off, Webb Gallery, Waxahachie, TX

2020

20 Years Anniversary Exhibition, Vielmetter Los Angeles, CA

Safer at Home: Pandemic Paintings, Vielmetter Los Angeles, CA

2019

Esther Pearl Watson: Dream Believer, University of Wisconsin-Parkside Fine Arts Gallery, Kenosha, WI

Mothership, Maureen Paley, London, UK

Folk Art Collection of John Mitchell from Eureka Springs AR The Stink Eye, Webb Gallery, Waxahachie, TX

2018

Esther Pearl Watson: Tire Universe, Vielmetter, Los Angeles, CA

April 14, 1561, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York

Good Job Dream Achiever, Webb Gallery, Waxahachie, Texas

Tire Universe, Vielmetter Los Angeles, CA

2017

Starship Pegasus, Antonio Columbo Arte Contemporanea, Milan, Italy

Blackhole Blowout, Webb Gallery, Waxahachie, Texas

Now More Than Ever, LACE Benefit Art Auction, Los Angeles

For the Good Times, Sp(a)ce, Pasadena

2016

The 11th Annual Blab Show, curated by Monte Beauchamp, Copro Gallery, Los Angeles

The Furies, Visitor Welcome Center, Los Angeles, CA

Cocoon, Arts Factory, Paris, FR

Galactic Plains, Gregorio Escalante Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Hearsay, Artists Reveal Urban Legends, LosJoCos Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

2015

Atrium, Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, TX
New Works, Webb Gallery, Waxahachie, TX
The Future Arrives, Galleri Galleberg, Norway
Family Lexicon, Antonio Colombo Gallery, Milan, IT

2014

Sky, Bedford Gallery, Leshner Center for the Arts, Walnut Creek, CA
Amazon Solitaire, Center for the Arts Eagle Rock, Eagle Rock, CA
Explorers, CSC Gallery, McLennan Community College, Waco, TX
Hexenhaus, 495 Alameda St, Altadena, CA
With Open Eyes, Grafikens Hus, Mariefried, Sweden
It's Not a Circus Without a Big Top, Webb Gallery, Waxahachie, TX

2013

Esther Pearl Watson, Vielmetter Los Angeles, CA

2012

Hidden Behind the Stars, Webb Gallery, Waxahachie, TX
Permanent Collection, Nancy Margolis Gallery, New York, NY
Cal/Arts MFA Graduate Exhibition, LA Mart, LA
Fort Beavatron, CalArts Mint Gallery, Valencia, CA

2011

CalArts Main Gallery, Valencia, CA
Incognito, Santa Monica Museum of Art, Santa Monica, CA
Land Of Magic, Leshner Center for the Arts, Bedford Gallery, Walnut Creek, CA
Women in Comics, Webb Gallery, Waxahachie, TX

2010

New Works, Webb Gallery, Waxahachie, TX

2009

Visions of the Future, Billy Shire Fine Art, Culver City, CA
Texas Instruments, Domy, Austin, TX
When in Texas act like a Texan, Webb Gallery, Waxahachie, TX

2008

3rd Annual LA Weekly Biennial, Track 16, Los Angeles, CA

Failure, The Lab at Belmar, Lakewood, CO

Blab Show!, Beach Museum of Art, Kansas State University, Kansas City, KS

LA Paint, Oakland Museum of California, Oakland, CA

2007

The Weirding Field, La Luz De Jesus, Los Angeles, CA

2006

What I Remember, Mendenhall Sobieski Gallery, Pasadena, CA

2005

Keep On Laughing, Katherine Mulherin Contemporary, Toronto, CA

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Dallas Museum of Art, TX

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA