

Lesley Vance

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Press Release

Xavier Hufkens is delighted to present a new series of oil paintings and watercolours by American artist Lesley Vance. This exhibition, the third with the gallery, demonstrates the change of direction that Vance's work has taken since 2014, now moving towards entirely invented images and bringing them towards the allusion of a physical reality.

Lesley Vance is an abstract painter whose visual language is rooted in her early engagement with still-life painting. Seeking to move beyond the boundaries of representation, Vance previously developed a process-based approach in which she translated everyday objects into abstract compositions. For these new works, Vance inverted her method. Freed from the rigours of direct observation, she now departs from immediate and improvised forms, often laid down wet-on-wet in concentrated bursts of activity. Henceforth, Vance allows the movements to follow their individual trajectories. Nothing is predetermined. As they coalesce, the artist will slow her pace in response to their singular and immutable logic. These variations in tempo, together with the dynamism of the swirling and looping forms, brings a new tensile strength to her work.

A consummate colourist, Vance's latest works also bear witness to her mastery of nuance and contrast, as well as her interest in colour as a physical and material entity. Using fewer shades, but expanding the range and possibilities of each, she not only augments the spatial depth of her paintings but also intensifies the clarity of the compositional elements. In the same vein, she introduces intriguing surface details, such as the ribbons of dark striated paint. This visual acuity results in a play with the viewer's perception of space and depth, deconstructing a straightforward analysis of the painting's creative genesis.

While the artist's paintings are independent, inward-looking entities, they are far from impersonal. Vance's instinctual way of working is nourished by her deep commitment with the art-historical canon, from influences as wide ranging as Hilma af Klint, René Magritte, Georgia O'Keeffe, Carla Accardi and Christina Ramberg, as well as other artistic disciplines, most notably sculpture and ceramics and artists such as Hans Arp, Ken Price and Hannah Wilke. What Vance is often responding to is a type of materiality as message—the ability to manipulate her medium to exploit both its density and descriptive fluidity.

Lesley Vance (b. 1977, Milwaukee, Wisconsin) lives and works in Los Angeles. Her work has recently been included in the following group exhibitions: *The Campaign for Art*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA (2016); *Variations: Conversations in and Around Abstract Paintings*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, LA (2015); and *Painter Painter*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN (2013). Solo presentations include: Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Bowdoin, ME (2012); the FLAG Art Foundation, New York, NY (2012); and, with Ricky Swallow, the Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, San Marino, CA (2012). Lesley Vance's work was also included in the 2010 Whitney Biennial, New York and is represented in the following museum collections: The Whitney Museum of American Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Hammer Museum.

Xavier Hufkens

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