

Lesley Vance

9 October – 15 November 2014

Press Release

Xavier Hufkens is pleased to present an exhibition of new work by American artist Lesley Vance, her second with the gallery.

Each painting by Vance can be considered an object in its own right, the result of an intense period of engagement with not just the physicality of her subject, but also the medium of painting. Working intuitively, the artist translates both the fixed and mutable qualities of a singular object or grouping before her – shape and form, texture, colour, shadows and highlights, the play of light across a surface – into abstract compositions that evoke a specific atmosphere. While grounded in reality, her most recent works exude a great sense of freedom and are not obviously tethered to their original starting point.

Vance often works wet-on-wet, a technique that allows her to experiment with the painted surface, but which only allows a limited window of opportunity for expression. Vance's canvases thus result from a concentrated period of addition and subtraction, construction and deconstruction – a process that is as deliberate as it is spontaneous, as considered as it is open to chance. As Vance's work has become more enigmatic, her paintings employ a brighter and more luminous colour palette. The occasional shifts in orientation from vertical to horizontal, the strong contrasts, and the shades of blue and green allude to the natural world and the tradition of landscape in American Modernist painting.

At the same time, Lesley Vance's work also draws upon the lineages of both abstract and representational painting, with Surrealism as an important touchstone. In Vance's compositions, objects dissolve into constellations of planes, lines and colours – the shapes on the canvas are often so ambiguous as to betray only a fleeting reference to the original inspiration source. The object that triggers the painting, instead of being defined by its own contours, is broken down into isolated, independent elements that can be manipulated at will – more 'substance' than strictly delineated 'object'. In Vance's canvases, the background no longer surrounds the object, but breaks through it – by opening and closing these spaces in the pictorial plane the artist is able to create the illusion of a three-dimensional space.

In addition to oil paintings, Lesley Vance will also be exhibiting a recent group of watercolours. In these, as in the new oils, the compositions exemplify not only the artist's ability to construct and dismantle a given form with a single gesture, but also her rare gift for constructing a sense of immensity on an intimate scale.

Lesley Vance was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1977. She lives and works in Los Angeles. Her work is currently on view in *Variations: Conversations in and Around Abstract Paintings*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (until 15 March 2015). Vance has also been the subject of solo exhibitions at the Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Bowdoin, ME; the FLAG Art Foundation, New York; and, with Ricky Swallow, at the Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, San Marino, CA. Recent group exhibitions include *Painter Painter*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN; *A House of Leaves. Second Movement*, David Roberts Art Foundation, London; *Difference*, Dallas Museum of Art, TX; *Tableaux*, MAGASIN – Centre National d'Art Contemporain, Grenoble, France; and 2010 Biennial Exhibition, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.