

## Press Release

### Lucy Dodd

*Heart Overture*

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Sprüth Magers, Los Angeles

Sprüth Magers

Lucy Dodd's new paintings teem with life and movement, relaying moments of spontaneous fun, chaotic action and alchemical energy. A panoply of forms – orbs, arches, streaks, bodily imprints – coalesce and morph from one edge of the composition to another, at times at a monumental scale as in works such as *Birth of a Living Heart* (2021) and *Heart's Recovery* (2021). In all their exuberance and diversity, the paintings in *Heart Overture* – Dodd's latest exhibition with Sprüth Magers and her first at the Los Angeles gallery – also hold within them a sense of evolution and becoming.

An "overture" is a proposal, a prelude; it invokes a beginning, like a curtain opening at the start of a performance. This body of work is the culmination of a seven-year cycle of paintings that, at the same time, introduces a new collaborative method of picture-making for the artist – one that has pushed her canvases into fresh aesthetic territories. Wanting to break away from painterly processes that she had come to master, Dodd called in the people closest to her, including her children, to help reinvent her approach and, in the process, to embark on a more vulnerable and open-ended means of working.

To create these works, Dodd laid a patchwork of raw canvases of different sizes across her studio floor, unstretched and abutting one another. Deriving her pigments from natural, and often unconventional, sources has long been a cornerstone of Dodd's practice; here, she let years-worth of these materials loose onto the canvases, creating watery pools, sprays and drips of bright-red cochineal, black foss leaf extract, and rich blues from lapis and azurite, which take their place alongside many other tinctures and acrylic paint. *In the Name of Love* (2021) exhibits one such unrestrained pour: its expansive field of red is punctuated by the imprints of studio tools, such as cloth rags, jars and tubs, whose rings and textures take on galactic overtones despite their very grounded origin.

Other improvisational gestures appear throughout Dodd's new paintings in the form of footprints large and small, as well as bicycle tire tracks whose arcing lines chart a journey across the studio floor from one canvas to the next. The sweeping rhythmic patterns of these marks impart an innate sense of joy and togetherness. Sparser compositions, such as *Heart Racing* (2021) and *Love is a Many Splendored Thing*

(2021), reveal yet another element of precariousness at the core of Dodd's newer, less controlled means of working: amid this openness, voices and feelings, once denied, become catalysts for transformation both physically and metaphorically across the spectrum of her canvases.

The artist has always taken an unconventional approach to the shapes and presentations of her paintings, and the installation in *Heart Overture* is no exception: its layout represents a concerted, cyclical journey from the smallest painting in the exhibition, *What the World Needs Now* (2021), to the show's largest work and the last to be completed, *Love's Discovery* (2021), whose scale and dimensions have seeded the rest of the installation. As a result, each canvas radiates its own individual compositional impulse, while also affirming its genesis as part of this cathartic group of paintings – the final body of work to be created within the artist's current studio. Together they offer a reflection on the state of the world, on what it means to be a woman, painter and mother while embracing newfound beginnings.

Lucy Dodd (\*1981, New York) lives in Kingston, NY. She completed studies at Art Center College of Design, CA (2004), and Bard College, New York (2011). Selected solo exhibitions include those at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2016); Power Station, Dallas (2016) and Rubell Family Collection, Miami (2014).

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