



To a Tree 2004 Oil on linen 49 x 33 in 124.5 x 83.8 cm

Dear Louise

a tribute to Louise Fishman

May 18 - June 30, 2023

Cheim & Read
547 West 25 Street
New York NY 10001

Cheim & Read is pleased to announce *Dear Louise: A Tribute To Louise Fishman* (1939 - 2021) an exhibition of paintings spanning four decades of the artist's career. The show will open on May 18 at the gallery's Chelsea location, 547 West 25th Street, New York, and run through June 30. This is Fishman's ninth solo exhibition at the gallery.

Writing in the *Brooklyn Rail* about Fishman's most recent solo at Cheim & Read (September 7 – October 28, 2017), the art historian and critic Jan Avgikos offered her own tribute: "We owe Fishman a lot. Over the course of more than half a century

painting in NYC, she's legitimately laid claim to more idioms of abstraction than any other painter. She's adamant in her embrace of gestural abstraction and its potential to achieve affective ends—no negation, no apologies."

Always an outsider, as an artist, a feminist, and a lesbian, she defied biases inside and outside the art world as she developed a non-objective practice not beholden to the machismo of Abstract Expressionism. Finding a kindred spirit in Eva Hesse, she embraced a personal ethos of "material experimentation and formal play," as Aruna D'Souza wrote in the catalogue for the 2017 show.

The works in *Dear Louise* display the range and depth of Fishman's art, beginning with *Mine and Yours* (1979), which she made after her return to oil painting following years of politicized language-based works on paper, its rich, sparkling impasto a testament to her comment, "I've always approached my work as if it were sculpture... my approach to color is as a material."

The paintings that follow underscore the variety and freedom of Fishman's outlook, from the aggressive blackness of *Night of Watching #2* (1988) to the misty, Venetian-inspired colors of *White Clouds, Blue Mountains* (1996); the linear scaffolding of *My City* (2002); and the Jenga-like blocks of

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earth tones in *To a Tree* (2004). In her final decade, she pushed her means of expression to further extremes: the rough, brooding swathes of color in *A Cold Spring* (2011) and the minimal mark-making of *A Better Resurrection* (2013) to the high-contrast, translucent swipes in *Sharps and Flats* (2017).

In these works, as Nathan Kernan wrote in the catalogue for her first exhibition at Cheim & Read (1998), “formalism has ‘grown together’ with natural forces, chance, intellectual courage, the inherent qualities of paint and the rhythms and reach of the body to produce powerfully suggestive works of alchemical transmutations and shifting forms.” At the time, Fishman was nearly 60 and would continue as a creative force for more than 20 years, ever changing, ever exploring.

Louise Fishman was born in Philadelphia and studied at the Philadelphia College of Art, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and the Tyler School of Art. She earned her MFA at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, in 1965.

Fishman’s work is included in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC; the High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia; and the Jewish Museum, New York, among others.

In 2016, the Neuberger Museum of Art in Purchase, New York, organized the artist’s first retrospective, which traveled to the Weatherspoon Art Museum, University of North Carolina at Greensboro. The Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia held a concurrent exhibition of her small-scale work, *Paper Louise Tiny Fishman Rock*.

Fishman died in New York City on July 26, 2021. The following month, a retrospective exhibition entitled *A Question Of Emphasis: Louise Fishman Drawings* opened at the Krannert Museum of Art on the campus of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 56 years after she received her MFA there.