

Caitlin Keogh
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The Upstairs

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Dear Caitlin,

Leaving your studio recently, I wrote in my notebook: *Roses are time travelers*. Each rose conjures all of history's roses, a numinous sequence, while also maintaining its it-ness (Clarice Lispector). I imagine you in Portland, Oregon last summer, working with the contingencies of drawing en plein air: the roses' relations with one another (they're highly sociable), as well as to the movements of the sun, the clouds, weather.

I think of my use of line as being like speaking in the imperative voice, a statement of fact which elides the visibility of the subject, you write in your last letter. Drawn with colored pencil and, in some cases, later painted in black and white, your roses are stripped of color: the forms speak for themselves.

As I write to you now, I hear poet Lyn Hejinian's line, on repeat: *A pause, a rose, something on paper*.

Your *Matrix* paintings offer connective tissue. They speak the language of grids, lattices, webs, nets. Playing with the opticality of scale and what colors do to each other (Marion Milner), these works take painting's substrate — the warp and weft of canvas — as their subject.

Found postcards are placed atop the smaller *Matrix* paintings, in double and triple. In your letter, you write: *The images of people working that are shown here, the grain sifters (Courbet's painting, Les Cribleuses de Blé) and the baker's daughter (Raphael's painting, La Fornarina), which was also a term for a prostitute, are chosen in connection with this identity of "worker", of how invisibility and also, corporeality figure into labor*. Activated by these historical objects, the paintings become thresholds, opening into matrixial space (Bracha Ettinger) — a dimension of psychic experience prior to language that exceeds the singular human subject. Here, mater and materia are co-emergent, echoing and reverberating across a womb-like weave of subjectivities.

In *Beige Matrix, Woman with Opera Glasses*, a postcard of Degas' sketch has been painted directly onto the canvas. The *Woman*, another time traveler, looks out from the painting through a pair of opera glasses. Is she looking at me? Perhaps she's looking through me. Beyond me. I'm unsettled, split between subject and object. Is this *Woman* your uncanny double? Her opera glasses, your paint brush. Degas, the *Woman*, the artist, the viewer: a hallucinatory matrix of gazes.

What grows from this matrixial ground?
Paintings and Drawings.

Kathleen

Kathleen Del Mar Miller is a writer and psychoanalyst living in New York City. She is the co-founder of PINKBEAM, a domestic art space in Brooklyn, New York.

Caitlin Keogh (b. 1982 in Anchorage, Alaska) lives and works in New York. Her work has recently been included in group shows at Fondation Carmignac, Porquerolles, France, and The Church, Sag Harbor, NY. Keogh has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA; Melas Papadopoulos, Athens, Greece; and MoMA PS1, Long Island City, NY. In 2021, Keogh completed a mural in the city of Holbaek, Denmark in conjunction with Holbaek Art, and in 2019, she participated in Art Basel Parours, Basel, Switzerland. Her work has also been exhibited at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, CA; MoMA Warsaw, Poland; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; Künstlerhaus Bremen, Germany; the Costume Institute at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; and the Queens Museum, Flushing Meadows, NY.

Her work is represented in the collections of the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Amorepacific Museum of Art, Seoul; the Rollins Museum of Art, Winter Park, Florida; and the Rhode Island School of Design Museum, Providence.