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Lesley Vance

Paintings, on paper

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Let's play fast and loose. Let's let the air out of our over-puffed tires for a minute. Let's shake a bit as we slide and blur across the floor. Let's be inchoate and atmospheric. That's how Lesley Vance is doing it in these new watercolors in which color justifies itself and a kind of automatic drawing evolves stroke into shape and then the increasingly delicate description of space. The artist explores her own miasmic looseness. Sitting flat on top of (rather than absorbed into) smooth, vellum-like surfaces, the liquefied pigment looks still-watery and alive seeming. Brushwork is aleatory and intuitive, meandering line-work somewhat reminiscent of late de Kooning or Brice Marden with his inked stick. Contrapuntally, the flow of watercolor is sliced with the scissored sharpness of collage, cut and arranged with an equally nimble sensitivity. She's been thinking a lot about Krasner's collaged paintings, full of internal disjunction, distance, and great graphic power.

These paintings embody alertness, a responsiveness to those fragile gifts of chance that can happen on the drawing table, or off, if you're paying close attention. She is in thrall to that magic moment when form and a new kind of visual sense first take hold, emergent out of static webs and fields of color. The sudden birth, the surprise invention of shapes has a lot to do with the feeling and pleasure in these works; they tap the surging energy of her oil paintings in their early, private stages. Form often appears through subtractive wiping away and erasure. Vance's pictures want to be several things at once: they want to bleed, spill, streak, and be messed up whenever they want *and also* be taut, tight, precise, and slanted on point. Her planes—painted and collaged—interlock in weird ways and cast spells of momentary optical confusion that merge and reorder layers. They say, let's slip and slide. Let's play fast and loose.

- Sarah Lehrer-Graiwer

The work of Lesley Vance (b. 1977, Milwaukee, Wisconsin) has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, Maine (2012); the FLAG Art Foundation, New York (2012); and the Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, San Marino, California, with Ricky Swallow (2012). Recent group exhibitions featuring her work include *Variations: Conversations in and Around Abstract Painting*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2014); *Painter Painter*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2013); *Difference*, Dallas Museum of Art (2012); and *2010 Whitney Biennial*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Vance's work is included in the public collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Milwaukee Art Museum, Wisconsin; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, among others. Her work is currently included in the exhibition *Campaign for Art* at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art through September 2016. Vance lives and works in Los Angeles.