

# ALFONSOARTIACO

**MELISSA KRETSCHMER**

*Drawn Sawn Cut*

6 April – 19 May 2018

**Alfonso Artiaco gallery is pleased to announce the opening of Melissa Kretschmer  
Friday, 06th of April 2018 at 7 pm, in the presence of the artist.**

For her third exhibition at Alfonso Artiaco gallery (previously in 2008, 2011), Melissa Kretschmer presents ten new works that retrace the formal research undertaken by the artist for many years. Process and materials are the means by which her work is generated and develops.

Rather than working from sketches or preliminary schemes she allows the work to develop, taking inspiration and cues from the materials themselves.

Melissa Kretschmer's paintings exist at the crossroads of the sculptural and the painterly, where the interaction of the works elements enables them to exist both on a plane and in a space all at once. They are as much about the inside as they are about the surface and support. With a wide variety of materials, Kretschmer's work reconfigures the defined borders of painting.

Taking as her palette plywood, vellum, gesso, gouache, beeswax and graphite, she introduces sawing and cutting as a means of drawing and sculpting. Beginning with common plywood the artist builds various layers with overlapping sheets of vellum washed with milky gesso in order to obtain a delicate and translucent surface.

Then, she reverses the process by carving back into the work to reveal both the original wood surface and its interior edges.

The resulting fissures generate new edges and surfaces to which she can apply beeswax or small amounts of gouache, literally painting back *into* the work.

*"I am interested in the interplay between very subtle, almost hidden subtleties and the coarseness of an excavated surface."*

Central to the artist's focus are two historically "marginal" formal elements: the edges of the painting and its interior. Considering these, she finds impetus in two thoughts that arose in her mind. First, if the edges are so important, why not put them in the center of the work? And secondly, given that the issue of surface and support have long been central to abstract painting, why not address the *inside* of both? Surface has everything to do with what lies beneath. It is shaped, colored and texturized by its own physicality, whether it is thin or thick, visible or not. What happens on the surface begins deep within.

Kretschmer never feels fully satisfied or convinced by the simple dichotomy of "surface and support". She always felt the presence of something more, that the experience was potentially more complicated and full than that. There is a literal and physical depth in painting, which inevitably enriches and accentuates the perceived depth. "What happens on the surface begins deep within."

Melissa Kretschmer was born in 1962 in Santa Monica (California). She lives and works in New York.

Kretschmer earned an MFA at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena.

She work has been extensively exhibited since the early 1990s. She has been featured in several museum exhibitions, including: the Boulder Museum of Art, in Colorado; Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation of Pepperdine University, Malibu, California; and the PS1 Museum, Long Island City, New York. From April 12<sup>th</sup>, the traveling exhibition *Painting After Postmodernism: Belgium – Italy – USA*, curated by Barbara Rose, including Melissa Kretschmer, takes place in the Reggia di Caserta.