

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

James
Cohan



291 GRAND ST JUN 22 - JULY 27, 2018

Helene Appel *Washing*

OPENING RECEPTION: FRIDAY, JUNE 22

Washing
2018
Acrylic, watercolor and oil on linen
47 1/8 x 31 3/8 in.

James Cohan will present *Washing*, an exhibition of new work by Helene Appel at the gallery's Lower East Side location from June 22 through July 27. This is Appel's second solo exhibition at James Cohan. The gallery will host an opening reception on Friday, June 22 from 6-8 PM.

Helene Appel turns an incisive aerial gaze upon the humble sights of everyday life. She paints puddles of water, ruffled tea towels, swaths of netting, and drifts of sand at actual size on untreated linen—teasing out their intrinsic beauty in precisely rendered, uncannily illusionistic paintings that verge on abstraction. Yet Appel's interest lies not in the trompe l'oeil effect, but in exploring the relationship between subject, surface, and the presence of the paintings in space. Painting, for Appel, is a negotiation between the subject's demands for its own depiction and her considerable ability to meet those demands pictorially.

In this exhibition, Appel presents a new series of sand paintings that reaffirm her commitment to exploring the tension between faithful representation and the transformative possibilities in the process of painting. The sand paintings represent a departure from the isolated items Appel arranges on a tabletop in her studio to paint at actual size. Here, the aerial perspective and true-to-life scale of these canvases reflect the experience of the subject in its environment. The visual slippage between the painted sand and the rough linen of the untreated canvas ground serves to refocus the viewer's attention on the surface of the painting, and on the picture as a surface. Appel's sustained interest in the representation of surface and transparency is also at play in her series of spilled water paintings. The edge of a puddle of soapy water is deftly communicated in only a few decisive brushstrokes of translucent white, while the soap bubbles within are intricately detailed.

Appel's sophisticated use of pattern, texture, and perspective allows her to marry the Minimalist insistence upon the finite flatness of the picture plane to the artful illusionism of traditional still-life painting. This playing between genres denies viewers an easy read of her work, an elusiveness that is furthered by the movements across scale of the works including in the exhibition. The viewer must relate the paintings as individual objects within the gallery space.

Helene Appel (born 1976, Karlsruhe, Germany) attended the Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Hamburg and received an MA from the Royal College of Art, London. Her work has been the subject of solo exhibitions including: Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle, Munich, Germany (2017); Waves, The Approach, London, UK (2017); Washing Up, P420, Bologna, Italy (2016); James Cohan Gallery, New York, NY (2014); The Approach, London, UK (2013); Kaiserringstipendium, Mönchehaus Goslar, Germany (2011); and Dorothea Schlueter Gallery, Hamburg, Germany (2011). Select group exhibitions include: Kettle's Yard at The Hepworth Wakefield, cur. Anthea Hamilton, The Hepworth Wakefield, Wakefield, UK (2016); Queensize - Female Artists from the Olbricht Collection, Museum Arnhem, Arnhem, Netherlands (2016); I Prefer Life, The Weserburg, Bremen, Germany (2016); CORALE, Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Frigoriferi Milanesi, Milan, Italy (2016); Tutta l'Italia e silenziosa, cur. Davide Ferri, Reale Accademia di Spagna, Rome (2015); Salondergegenwart, Hamburg (2015); A Scene of Painting Today, cur. Marco Bazzini and Davide Ferri, Centro per l'arte contemporanea Luigi Pecci, Prato (2013); ÜBER DIE DINGE, Kulturstiftung Schloss Agathenburg, Agathenburg, Germany (2013); Lines of Thought, Parasol Unit, London, UK (2012); Augentäuschung, Kunsthalle Wilhelmshaven, Germany (2010); Beating The Bounds, Art Now, curated by Lizzie Carey-Thomas and Clarrie Wallis, Tate Britain, London (2009). Helene Appel lives and works in Berlin, Germany.

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