

Suzan Frecon

23 May–30 June 2018

Opening reception

Wednesday, 23 May, 6–8 PM



noh, 2017. Oil on linen, in two parts, 84 1/8 × 104 × 1 1/2 inches
(213.7 × 264.2 × 3.8 cm)

David Zwirner is pleased to present new paintings by American artist Suzan Frecon at the gallery's Hong Kong location, marking her first solo exhibition in Asia.

For almost five decades, Frecon has created abstract oil paintings and works on paper that are at once reductive and expressive. Made over long stretches of time, her canvases embody the durational activity of painting itself and invite the viewer's sustained attention: these, as the artist herself has noted, are "paintings that you experience."¹

The artist's compositions are characterized by arcing and asymmetrically balanced forms and are defined by precise spatial and proportional relationships. Each surface is developed carefully and gradually, evolving from one canvas to the next in a process that combines preparation and intuition, order and chance. In Frecon's paintings, composition serves as a foundational structure, holding color, material, and light.

Mixing pigments and oils to differing effects, the artist's almost tactile use of color and contrasting matte and sheen surfaces heightens the visual experience of her work. Depending on the light source and viewing angle, different perceptions emerge. Colors and surfaces vary in terms of density and reflectivity, and areas of the compositions frequently shift between positive and negative space, or between figure and ground.

As Richard Shiff has noted, "Within a fantasia of color, Frecon suspends the force of her structure. Offsetting the unseen mathematical foundation, her visible surface is organic and irregular, as if she were working against herself ... Her paint, especially along ellipsoidal contours, develops an uneven appearance due to the distribution of the pigment and its oil binder as she works the material against the resist of the linen. Add to this the transient effects of ambient light from which Frecon's surfaces are designed to benefit, and what began as a logical geometrical structure has become suspended in a web of living sensation. Her composition ... may well be experienced as anti-composition. It is and is not."²

Typically made on found vintage paper, Frecon's watercolors, in turn, take as their point of departure the unique characteristics of each leaf of paper she uses. Varying from sheet to sheet, the irregular scale, texture, and surfaces impose their own dynamic constraints upon her compositions. These works demonstrate in a different medium the artist's continued engagement with the chromatic and sensory possibilities of painting, and of pure abstraction.

Suzan Frecon was born in 1941 in Mexico, Pennsylvania. Following a degree in fine arts from Pennsylvania State University in 1963, she spent three years at the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris and studied paintings in museums throughout Europe.

The artist's work has been represented by David Zwirner since 2008. Previous solo shows with the gallery include *recent painting* (New York, 2010); *paper* (New York, 2013); *oil paintings and sun* (New York, 2015); *watercolors and small oil paintings* (London, 2017); and *recent oil paintings* (New York, 2017).

Frecon has exhibited widely in the United States and internationally. In 2008, her work was the subject of a major solo exhibition, *form, color, illumination: Suzan Frecon painting*, at The Menil Collection in Houston, Texas, which traveled to the Kunstmuseum Bern in Switzerland. She has participated in a number of group exhibitions such as the 2000 and 2010 Whitney Biennials. In 2016, Frecon received the Artist Award from the Artists' Legacy Foundation in Oakland, California.

Public institutions that hold works by the artist include the Art Institute of Chicago; Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Kunstmuseum Bern, Switzerland; The Menil Collection, Houston, Texas; The Morgan Library & Museum, New York; The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. She lives and works in New York.

¹ Suzan Frecon, "text and related work," in *Suzan Frecon: oil paintings and sun*. Exh. cat. (New York: David Zwirner Books, 2015), p. 63. Frecon notes: "These are not pictures that you look at. They are paintings that you experience. There is no 'story.'"

² Richard Shiff, *Suzan Frecon: painting*. Exh. cat. (New York: David Zwirner Books, 2017), p. 67.

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