

# GALERIE NÄCHST ST. STEPHAN ROSEMARIE SCHWARZWÄLDER

## CAITLIN LONEGAN Points of View

June 27 – September 1, 2018

We first featured the American painter Caitlin Lonigan in our gallery in a show together with Laura Owens and Rebecca Morris curated by Philipp Kaiser in the context of Vienna's "curated by" event in 2014. "Points of View" is now her first solo show with us and primarily presents new paintings and works on paper, while also marking the publication of her artist's book *For Dorothea: Paintings, Drawings & Notes* by Verlag für moderne Kunst.

Lonigan's compositions are based on sketches and drawings, the markings and traces of which are translated into large-scale pictures. These marks refer to the history of (abstract) painting and also reflect her personal reaction to the site.

"Caitlin Lonigan's paintings exhibit a specific kind of gestural abstraction that eschews the grand, one-off gestures of mid-twentieth-century abstract expressionism. In a way, there's nothing heroic about her process: each painting emerges as an accrual of marks built up slowly over time. She works on multiple canvases concurrently; some take more than a year to complete. Over these periods, the paintings migrate around her studio, from the floor to the wall and back again. Equipped with a basic arsenal of paint, linseed oil, and spirits, she relies on a heap of borrowed tricks, such as frottage, resist, or embossing to build up the surfaces. While her techniques allow for occasional chance effects, each mark is a calculated gesture, appropriated from smaller studies and then copied and refined on larger canvases. ... Every one of the artist's marks has a provenance, and the canvas displays their individual intentions or behaviors in how they move in space or how they reflect or absorb light.

Lonigan's alienation from abstract expressionism is more than a generational divide. She deliberately refuses allegiance with any formal school or position, stating, 'It's not interesting if you know where the artist is.' Likewise, looking at her current work, the viewer is equally ungrounded. With the dark hues and metallic sheens of her palette, her newest paintings are earthy and unfathomably deep, and yet still fracture our attention. Our eye floats around her canvases as it tries to decipher each mark as the result of a stroke, flood, or spray of paint. These gestures hover, collide, and weave into and around each other, yielding a satisfying disorientation."

(Jen Hutton, *Made in LA 2014*, exhibition catalog, UCLA Hammer Museum)

Her works also remind us of what Georges Didi-Huberman once wrote in *Ce que nous voyons, ce qui nous regarde* (1992) – namely, that a picture is not a decipherable structure, and the visible does not become a part of the legible. This "negativity of the visual" results in an active relationship between the picture and beholder that is also based on the artwork's simultaneous presence and inaccessibility. We must accept this back and forth between showing and withdrawing in order to let a picture regard and speak to us, so that what we see before us always resonates within us, looks at us, and relates to us.

Caitlin Lonigan describes a similar experience when reading George Eliot's book *Middlemarch* (1871), one of the most important novels of the Victorian era, and she dedicated her artist's book to the main character, Dorothea Casaubon. The third-person omniscient narrator sometimes alternates with a first-person narrator in a shift that also resonates with Lonigan. "I think when we look at paintings, there's often this assumption – against our better judgment – that the work is a stand-in for the artist. But for me, I think a lot about where the 'I' is in the painting. What's the position? What's the voice? What's the narration?"

Caitlin Lonigan was born in 1982 in Long Island, New York, she lives and works in Los Angeles. Her works have been shown in many group exhibitions, several of which were in California – for example, in the major survey show "Made in LA 2014" at the UCLA Hammer Museum in Los Angeles. In 2017, she participated in the exhibition "Abstract Painting Now! Gerhard Richter, Katharina Grosse, Sean Scully" at the Kunsthalle Krems. Lonigan's works can be found in many museums and collections, including the UCLA Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, the Berezdivin Collection in Puerto Rico, the Sammlung Goetz in Munich, and the SoArt Sammlung in Vienna.

Caitlin Lonigan's artist's book: *For Dorothea: Paintings, Drawings & Notes*, Galerie nächst St. Stephan Rosemarie Schwarzwälder (Vienna: Verlag für moderne Kunst, 2018).