
LEHMANN MAUPIN

Liza Lou: Classification and Nomenclature of Clouds

September 6—October 27, 2018

501 West 24th Street, New York

@lehmannmaupin | #lizalou

Opening Reception: Thursday, September 6, 6-8 PM



Pyrocumulus, 2018, oil paint on woven glass beads on canvas, 55.75 x 56.25 x 3 inches, 141.6 x 142.9 x 7.6 cm. Photo: Joshua White. Courtesy the artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Hong Kong, and Seoul.

New York, July 31, 2018—Lehmann Maupin is pleased to present *Liza Lou: Classification and Nomenclature of Clouds* as the inaugural exhibition of the gallery's new, additional location at West 24th Street and Tenth Avenue. This exhibition, her first in New York City in over a decade, will encompass painting, sculpture, drawing, and video. A continuation of the exhibition will be featured at Lehmann Maupin's West 22nd Street location, with a room dedicated to an installation of paintings and sculpture from Lou's *Terra* series. **The gallery will host an opening reception for the artist on Thursday, September 6, from 6 to 8 PM at 501 West 24th Street.**

Liza Lou's sculptures, room-size installations, and performances have broken boundaries between art and craft, sculpture and painting since the unveiling of *Kitchen* (1991–1996) at the New Museum in New York in 1996. Eschewing the well-traveled path in art school to pursue a self-guided exploration of more traditional media like painting and sculpture, Lou forged an original vision. A life-size replica of a kitchen in the midst of a museum

gallery would hardly cause a stir, were it not for the fact that the work, now in the collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art, is made entirely of glass beads. In the years since, Lou's work has continued to break boundaries as it has developed from room-size tableaux taken from everyday life—such as *Backyard* (1996–1999) and *Trailer* (1998–2000)—and works no less monumental yet distinctly more sober in their themes, such as *Security Fence* (2005) and *Cell* (2004–2006), to her recent abstract sculptures and wall reliefs. Throughout these shifts in her practice, process, labor, and beauty are always inextricably linked to the meaning of the work.

The title of the exhibition is inspired by amateur meteorologist Luke Howard's *Essay on the Modification of Clouds*, which met with great acclaim when it was presented as a lecture in 1802. The poet Mark Strand recently wrote, "Clouds are thoughts without words," yet Howard was able to give names to the ungraspable. By classifying and naming the clouds, he influenced painters and poets alike. Observing daily atmospheric phenomena in the two cities where the artist divides her time—Durban, South Africa, where clouds are often tumultuous, and Los Angeles, where skies are mostly blue—Lou began to make cloud paintings *en plein air*. This exhibition features the resulting monumentally scaled work, *The Clouds* (2015–2018), recently exhibited in the 21st Biennale of Sydney. Stretching 50 feet across by 23 feet high in Lehmann Maupin's new gallery space, *The Clouds* is comprised of a grid of 600 beaded cloths, which are hand sewn in her Durban studio. These cloths become the surface upon which the artist paints and then partially smashes the beads away with a hammer, revealing the paint-stained network of thread beneath. The materiality of the cloths is in stark contrast with the groundlessness of passing clouds.

Transformation and mutability, which is the essential nature of clouds, unfolds as the underlying theme for other works in the exhibition. For example, in *Nacreous* (2018), Lou paints over the surface of the beads, and then layers additional woven cloths with the beads crushed away atop the painted forms, creating a *sfumato* effect with hazy skeins. In *Nimbostratus* (2018), Lou utilizes a grid pattern and glass cloths to different effect. Here, she applies thick oil paint to 16 glass bead-woven panels, then hangs them reversed to reveal the cloud-like stains and discoloration, which is the result of chemical oxidation of the paint on the silver-lined glass.

The exhibition also includes a series of sculpture and wall reliefs where Lou challenges the limitations of her chosen material. Glass beads are typically limited by monochrome color and uniformity, inviting repetitive weaving patterns, however, Lou developed a technique using different sizes of spheres sewn together into complex, cell-like structures. These organic, impasto-paint-like forms, in works such as *Pyroclastic* (2018) and *Primary* (2018), are thus built by accretion, evoking multiform natural phenomena.

There are two large-scale examples of Lou's drawing practice, which have taken more than 11 years to complete. Lou considers the smooth, gessoed canvases upon which she draws to be instruments; as each mark is made, it is accompanied by an audible sound from the artist, which varies from a mantra-like drone to gospel-like euphoric whoops and groans. The lower-level gallery of Lehmann Maupin will be dedicated to *Drawing Instrument* (2018), a video in which layered recordings of many days of drawing and singing are compiled into a complex and haunting audio/visual remix, in which she captures each small circular mark she makes while singing the word "oh" over and over again. Falling just short of the mantra "om," "oh" repeats the o-like shape she is drawing, and it is also an exclamation between certainty and uncertainty, which lies at the heart of all art processes.

A catalogue with an essay by independent Los Angeles-based curator Jenelle Porter and designed by Conny Purtill of Purtill Family Business will accompany the exhibition.

About the artist

Liza Lou (b. 1969, New York; lives and works in Los Angeles) has had solo exhibitions of her work organized at Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase, NY (2015); Wichita Art Museum, Wichita, KS (2015); Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego (2013); SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, GA (2011); Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf, Germany (2011); Bass Museum of Art, Miami (2001); and Akron Art Museum, Akron, OH (2000). Select group exhibitions featuring her work include *SUPERPOSITION: Equilibrium & Engagement*, 21st Biennale of Sydney (2018); *Screen: Virtual Material*, DeCordova Sculpture and Park Museum, Lincoln, MA; (2018); *All things being equal...*, Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art, Cape Town, South Africa (2017); *Beyond Boundaries: Feminine Forms*, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia; *Women's Work*, National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa; *Home Land Security*, FOR-SITE Foundation, San Francisco (2016); *Sleight of Hand: Painting and Illusion*, San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose, CA (2014); *The Artist's Museum*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2010); and *Skin Fruit: Selections from the Dakis Joannou Collection*, curated by Jeff Koons, New Museum, New York (2010). Her work is in numerous international public and private collections, including the Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo, NY; Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH; de Young Museum, San Francisco; François Pinault Foundation, Palazzo Grassi, Venice; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

Lou is the recipient of the 2013 Anonymous Was a Woman Award and a 2002 MacArthur Foundation Fellowship.

About Lehmann Maupin

Rachel Lehmann and David Maupin founded Lehmann Maupin in 1996. The gallery represents a diverse range of American artists, as well as artists and estates from across Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, and the Middle East. It has been instrumental in introducing numerous artists from around the world in their first New York exhibitions. Known for championing artists who create groundbreaking and challenging forms of visual expression, the gallery prioritizes personal investigations and individual narratives. Lehmann Maupin prizes the distinct conceptual approaches that its artists offer on the essential matters that shape international culture today, including gender, class, religion, history, politics, and globalism. In 2013, with two locations in New York, significant interest in its artists abroad, and growing opportunities in new markets, Lehmann Maupin opened an additional location in Hong Kong, followed by Seoul in 2017. For more information on the gallery and its artists, visit www.lehmannmaupin.com

Current & Upcoming Exhibitions

Nicholas Hlobo, *Ulwamkelo*, July 12—August 25, 2018, West 22nd Street, NEW YORK

Gridology, July 12—October 24, 2018, Pedder Building, HONG KONG

Marilyn Minter, August 30—October 27, 2018, Pedder Building, HONG KONG

Suh Seok, September 8—October 27, 2018, West 22nd Street, NEW YORK

For more information on Liza Lou, or other Lehmann Maupin artists, please contact Kathryn McKinney at +1 212 255 2923 or kathryn@lehmannmaupin.com.

###