

BORTOLAMI

Lesley Vance

1 March – 20 April 2019

Opening Friday, March 1 from 6:00 – 8:00 pm

Bortolami is pleased to announce Lesley Vance's first exhibition with the gallery, a series of nine new paintings.

In Vance's recent work, bands of monochrome paint overlap with long, calligraphic streaks of indeterminate color, their various pigments brushed into a tertiary swirl. Other paintings intersperse sinuous, coal-black marks next to deeply saturated fields of chromatic strata. There are no starts or stops to any of these circuitous forms, but *trompe l'oeil* bends and folds which recede outside the picture plane.

These seemingly infinite arcs of color are barely contained by the modest size of Vance's canvases, the largest of which have been scaled up from recent exhibitions to three feet in length. Even this slight increase in surface area has greatly augmented the potential for movement and gestural abstraction in what are some of Vance's most complex compositions to date.

Vance's palette has also expanded to incorporate warm yellows and oranges and bright greens which stray further from the dark, Baroque color of her early works. The new paintings are shaped by a slow, improvisational process in which provisional colors and marks are transformed into the fully formed visual motifs for which Vance is known. But while most artists work towards a gradual resolution of an artwork that fulfills their own expectations, Vance works conversely. As paintings progress within their own subconscious evolution, there is a greater distance between the artist and the work, allowing each composition space to develop their own agency from Vance and from one another.

In an essay for an upcoming monograph on Vance, curator Douglas Fogle compares her serpentine motifs to another malleable, highly sculpted media – that of human hair. He goes further to relate the paintings to the myth of Medusa, whose snakes of hair and paralyzing gaze turned onlookers to stone. Or from a more distant perspective, a metamorphosis from organic to inorganic matter. The mythological subject is a parable for the latent possibilities in Vance's work and their power to transfix the viewer.

Lesley Vance (b. 1977, Milwaukee, Wisconsin) has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the FLAG Art Foundation, New York; Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Bowdoin, Maine; and The Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens, San Marino, California (with Ricky Swallow). Recent group exhibitions include *Aftereffect: Georgia O'Keeffe and Contemporary Painting* at the MCA Denver (2019); *The Campaign for Art*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2016); *Don't Shoot the Painter*, Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Milan (2015); *Variations: Conversations in and Around Abstract Paintings*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2014); *Painter Painter*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota (2013); *A House of Leaves. Second Movement*, David Roberts Art Foundation, London (2012); *Difference*, Dallas Museum of Art (2012) and *The Whitney Biennial*, The Whitney Museum of American Art (2010).

Her paintings are featured in the public collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, among many others. Vance lives and works in Los Angeles.