

Press Release

Painters Reply: Experimental Painting in the 1970s and now Curated by Alex Glauber & Alex Logsdail

June 27 – August 9, 2019

504 W 24th Street & 138 Tenth Avenue, New York

Opening: June 26, 6 – 8pm

In September of 1975, *Artforum* published a special issue on painting. In addition to articles such as “Painting and the Struggle for the Whole Self” and “Painting and Anti-Painting: A Family Quarrel”—in which Max Kozloff said “brush wielders were afflicted by a creative halitosis”—were the responses to a questionnaire polling 21 painters on the state and prospects of the medium.¹ While the construct suggests an attempt to engage the question of painting’s future, the tone of both the preface and three questions is exceedingly stilted, rendering it more of an obituary than rumination; an indictment of futility.

When Sol LeWitt declared in 1967 that the execution of the art object was now a “perfunctory affair”², it made Greenbergian formalism seem trivial and antiquated. As curator Katy Siegel noted in her 2006 exhibition “High Times Hard Times”, which explored unconventional painting from the late 1960s and early 1970s, a lack of a clear paradigm shift left the medium feeling listless. Terms such as “Lyrical Abstraction” and “New Informalism” failed to capture the breadth and dynamism of the medium, leaving many to simply condemn it. However, what if this lack of cohesion speaks more to a liberation of the medium as opposed to a symptom of struggle?

Painters Reply, curated by Alex Glauber and Alex Logsdail, aims to answer the Artforum questionnaire through an exploration of experimental painting practices starting in the 1970s and continuing to the present moment. The selected artists reveal how the pervasive antipathy towards painting perhaps afforded a greater degree of latitude whereby materiality, application, atypical support, performative impulse and format were all of a sudden in play. The exhibition brings together a diverse group of artists, including some of those published in Artforum’s responses to the questionnaire such as Joan Snyder and Dona Nelson, where the common denominator is aesthetic emancipation.

Following this survey of experimental painting from the 1970s, *Painters Reply* traces this vanguard spirit to the current moment. The selected artists advance painting by probing similar fault lines — aesthetic variables relating to materiality, execution and presentation. For instance, Jacqueline Humphries’ “Black Light Paintings” harness light to activate an otherwise static surface with similar objectives to Mary Corse who turned to glass microspheres in 1968 as a visual catalyst. Similarly, one can draw a through line between Joe Overstreet’s “Flight Pattern” series of the early 1970s and the current practice of Eric N. Mack. Overstreet’s unstretched canvases fluidly dissect space through a web of ropes which suspend his abstractions like sails anchored to the floor, walls, and ceiling surrounding them. “My paintings don’t let the onlooker glance over them, but rather take them deeply into them and let them out—many times by different routes.”³ This ethos resonates

¹ Max Kozloff, ‘Painting and Anti-Painting: A Family Quarrel’, *Artforum* Vol.14, no. 1, September 1975, p 38.

² Sol LeWitt, ‘Paragraphs on Conceptual Art’, *Artforum* Vol.5, no. 10, Summer 1967, pp. 79-83

³ “Joe Overstreet,” *Rehistoricizing the Time Around Abstract Expressionism in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1950s–1960s*, <http://rehistoricizing.org/joe-overstreet-2/>.

with Eric N. Mack whose painterly assemblages cloak spaces in works that collapse and fuse the histories of abstract painting and the aesthetics of fashion.

Artists include Polly Apfelbaum, Lynda Benglis, Sadie Benning, Roy Colmer, Matt Connors, Mary Corse, Lucy Dodd, Guy Goodwin, Ron Gorchov, Ralph Humphrey, Jacqueline Humphries, Al Loving, Israel Lund, Eric N. Mack, Dona Nelson, Joe Overstreet, Steven Parrino, Howardena Pindell, David Reed, Dorothea Rockburne, Ruth Root, Sean Scully, Joan Snyder, Ted Stamm, Stanley Whitney and Duane Zaloudek.

About Lisson Gallery

Lisson Gallery is one of the most influential and longest-running international contemporary art galleries in the world. Today the gallery supports and develops over 60 international artists across two exhibition spaces in London and two in New York as well as its new space in Shanghai. Established in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, Lisson Gallery pioneered the early careers of important Minimal and Conceptual artists, such as Art & Language, Carl Andre, Daniel Buren, Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long and Robert Ryman among many others. In its second decade the gallery introduced significant British sculptors, including Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Shirazeh Houshiary and Julian Opie, to the international public for the first time. The gallery represents leading international artists such as Marina Abramović, Ai Weiwei, John Akomfrah, Susan Hiller, Liu Xiaodong, Tatsuo Miyajima and Sean Scully, as well as a number of renowned artist estates, including Roy Colmer, the Leon Polk Smith Foundation and the John Latham Foundation. It is also responsible for raising the international profile of a younger generation of artists led by Cory Arcangel, Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, Ryan Gander, Haroon Mirza, Laure Prouvost, Pedro Reyes and Wael Shawky.

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