

Abstract Horizons

Shara Hughes, Rebecca Morris, Caragh Thuring

Curated by Melli Ink

29 August – 17 October 2015

Opening hours:

Wednesday – Friday 11–18

Saturday 11–17

and by prior arrangement

Abstract Horizons finds Grieder Contemporary presenting an exhibition curated by Melli Ink featuring three painters whose careers Ink has been following for a number of years and whose work she admires for its immense conceptual and formal openness. Shara Hughes, Rebecca Morris and Caragh Thuring represent a new generation of painters who have discovered working methods and forms of expression enabling each of them to develop a wholly personal and independent visual idiom. All three take great pleasure in the act of painting, in experimenting and in consciously opting for the myriad of possibilities offered by painting as a genre.

Shara Hughes describes her approach to painting as “organic and slightly surrealist”. She starts by giving her gesso-primed canvases a coat of colour wash, which lets the paint – and her unconscious – run free. Her palette is rich and intensive: imbued with strength and exuding vigour, the abstract, sweeping motifs and patterns occupy the entire surface of the canvas. They shift effortlessly between the abstract and the figurative. The works often feature painted frames, which create a picture within a picture and act as windows to an imagined pictorial reality. The titles chosen by Hughes have a humorous undertone related to her engagement with the history of painting or her own biography. Probed about the landscapes she has produced since 2014, she says: “I wonder if I’m making these landscapes because I’m feeling nostalgic for wild untouched land? At the end of the day, the work is about marks, invention, intention, playfulness, and trust. I want to enjoy painting right now”.

Rebecca Morris has been pursuing a passion of hers for 20-plus years – one that gives her unfettered access to the ready supply of motifs and patterns of modern art and abstractionism. Composed in 1994, her *MANIFESTO (For Abstractionists and Friends of the Non-Objective)* contains the imperative: “Make work that is so secret, so fantastic, so dramatically old school/new school that it looks like it was found in a shed, locked up since the 1940s”. With her superlative technical skills, Morris succeeds in referencing a variety of traditions from Bauhaus, Constructivism and Cubism via Pattern Painting to graffiti and urban culture, before casually going beyond them. The observer is spellbound by the ease and apparent effortlessness she exhibits, placing fragmentary, abstract motifs in disconcerting, novel combinations on the canvas.

Caragh Thuring eschews preliminary sketches when working on her unprimed canvases, whose greyish brown hues provide the setting for her enigmatic pictorial creations. Thuring’s motifs – volcanoes, pyramids of industrial installations, brick walls and human silhouettes, appear like sculptural props in an undefined space devoid of hierarchy. It is striking that large parts of the canvas remain unworked, virtually empty. The works have titles, and a number of the motifs are figurative, such that we, as viewers, instinctively imagine ourselves to be on safe ground, only to

realise that what we are dealing with is less narration, more challenging experiment. Thuring says about her output: "However singular the subject, I am interested in how the painting itself might house it in a different context. I am looking to construct speculative environments that the viewer can be involved with or spend time with; painting interrupts the speed of absorption."

Shara Hughes, born in Atlanta in 1981, lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. Her work has been seen in numerous solo and group exhibitions. The former include the Museum of Contemporary Art, Georgia, Atlanta; the Atlanta Contemporary Art Center, Atlanta; American Contemporary, New York; Rivington Arms, New York; Metroquardo, Turin; and the Galerie Mikael Anderson, Copenhagen. This year she is participating in group exhibitions at Coburn Projects, London and Salon 94, New York, amongst others.

Rebecca Morris, born in Honolulu, Hawaii in 1969, lives and works in Los Angeles. She studied at Smith College, Northampton/Massachusetts and at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her participations in group and solo exhibitions include institutions such as the Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht; Kunsthalle Lingen; The Renaissance Society, Chicago; Kuntmuseum St. Gallen; Hessel Art Museum, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; and Santa Monica Museum of Art. Her works are on display at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht; and Sammlung Goetz, Munich.

Caragh Thuring, born in Brussels in 1972, lives and works in London. Her work is represented in numerous public (e. g. Tate Modern) and private (e. g. Zabłudowicz, London) collections. Her most recent solo exhibitions include the Chisenhale Gallery, London; Anthony Meier Fine Arts, San Francisco; Simon Preston Gallery, New York; and the Thomas Dane Gallery, London.