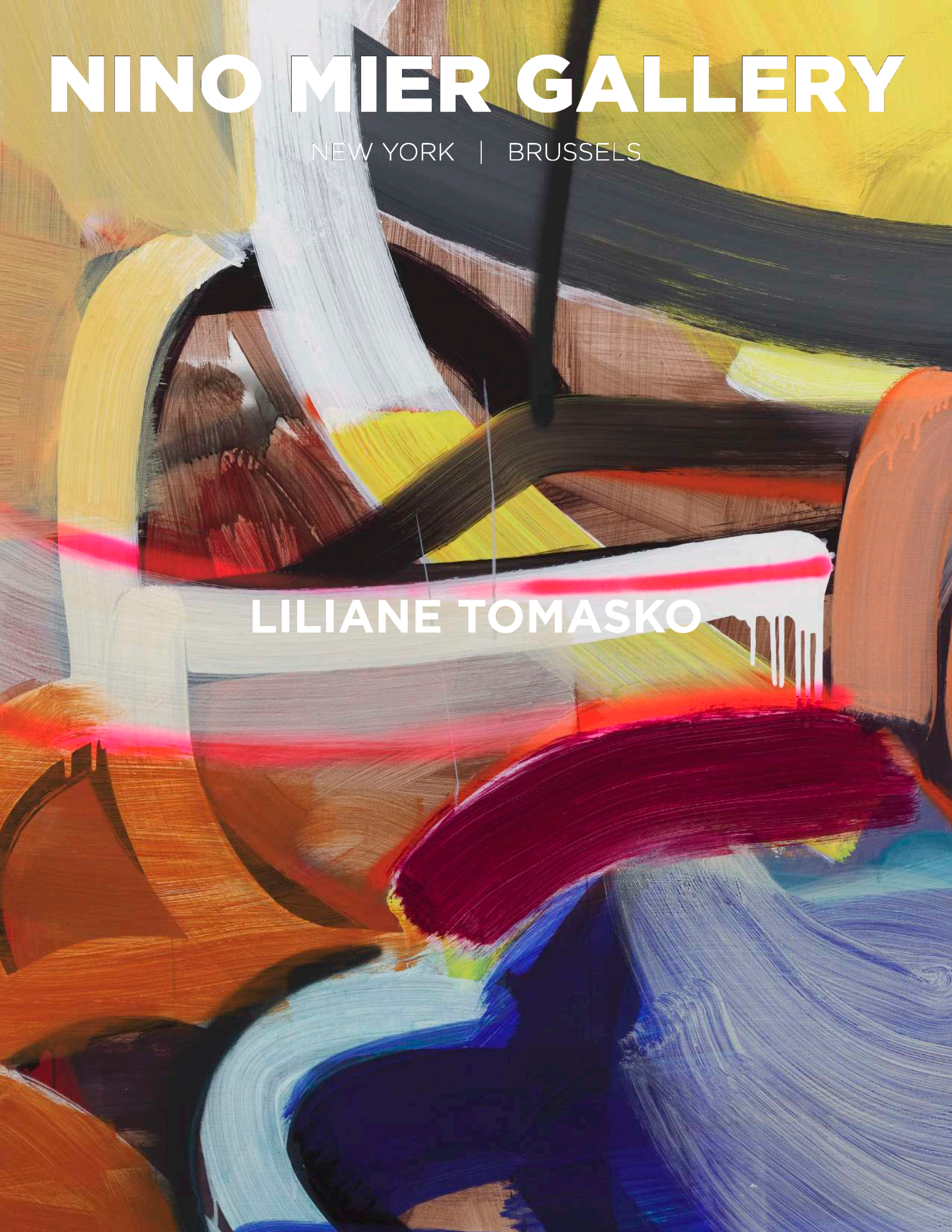
NINO MIER GALLERY

NEW YORK | BRUSSELS



LILIANE TOMASKO

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BIOGRAPHY

LILIANE TOMASKO



b. 1967, Zurich, CH
Lives and works between New York, NY, US, and Mooseurach, DE

Drawn to representing oneiric, liminal spaces and states of consciousness, Liliane Tomasko's canvases comprise arrangements of sweeping, curvilinear brushstrokes that fluidly intertwine like trails of motion or specters. Her paintings invoke viewers' entire sensorium, suggesting the feel, smell, and look of a scene without representing it as the eye might perceive it. From 2000-2014, much of Tomasko's oeuvre centered on evocations of the textures, fabrics, and atmospheres of domestic interiors. Based upon close-up polaroids taken by the artist of clothes belonging to absent others, used mattresses, slept-in bedsheets, and light-filtering curtains, her paintings brought inspired attention to the traces and impressions of life visible in the materials left in one's wake. These works cultivate a sense of intimacy absent of its figural representation.

Tomasko's recent works develop her interest in powerfully atmospheric evocations of psyche. Abstract acrylic paintings distinguish themselves from the paintings inspired by polaroids, instead searching for the subconscious through color, and pictorial space and depth through shadow and light. In such emotionally magnetic works, Tomasko pushes beyond the haptic—the sensuality of the material world—to explore the world of dreams: "we know that there is something other, a dark matter which shapes our lives and our actions, our interactions with the world in which we live. Every night we are given the opportunity to submerge and connect with that which we know to be there, but eludes our need to define and name, to take possession of it, to bring it to the communal realm which we all share."

Liliane Tomasko (b. 1967, Zurich, CH; lives and works between New York, NY, US, and Mooseurach, DE) earned her BFA at the Chelsea College of Art & Design, and her MFA at the Royal Academy of Arts, London. She has had solo exhibitions at the New York Studio School, New York, US; IVAM, Valencia, SP; Kerlin Gallery, Dublin, IE; Kewenig, Berlin, DE; Kunstmuseum Kloster unser lieben Frauen Magdeburg, DE; The Edward Hopper Museum and Study Center, NY, among many others. Tomasko's work is collected by many public and private collections, including the Albertina Collection, AS; the Lowe Art Museum, US; Try-Me Collection, US; Sammlung Klein, DE; Hilti Art Foundation, IR; Collection du Conseil Départemental du Var, FR; Kunsthalle Karlsruhe, DE; Kunstmuseum Kloster unser lieben Frauen Magdeburg, DE; Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin, IE; IVAM-Institut Valencia d'Art Modern, Valencia, SP; K20 K21 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, DE; Kunstmuseum Bern, Bern, CH, among others.

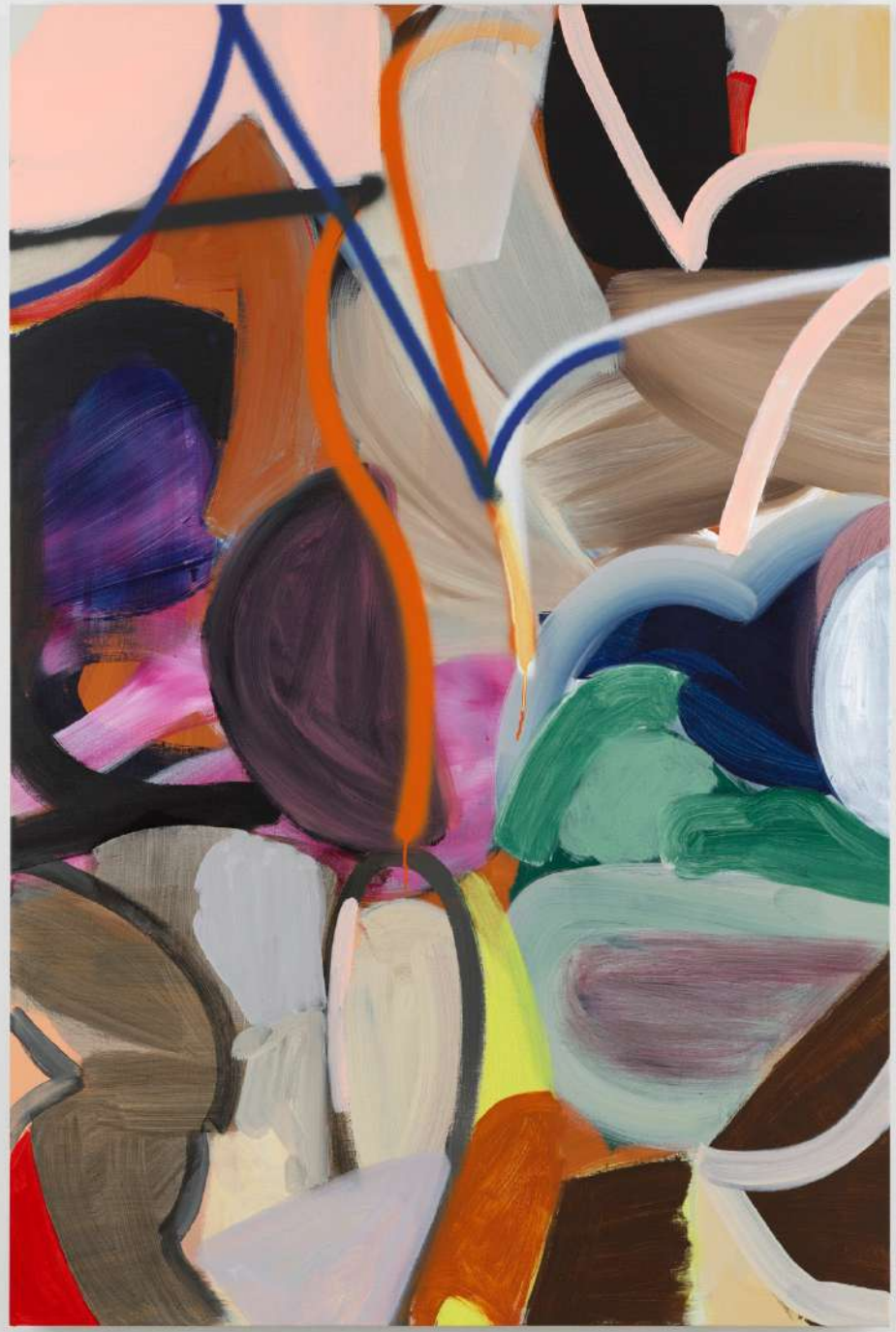


SAMPLE WORKS

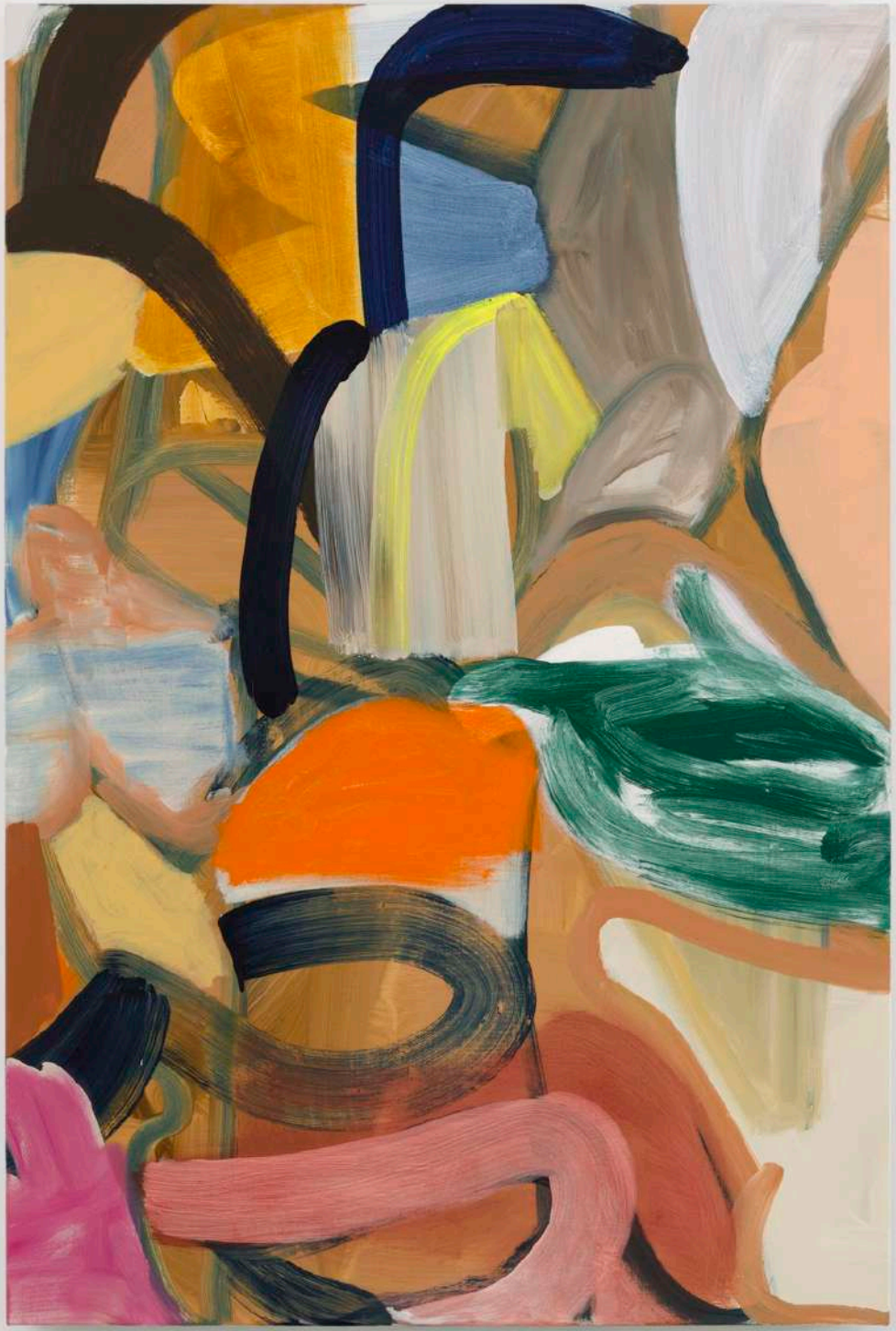
*sample selection does not reflect current availability



POEM THING (Slowly the evening puts on the garments held for it by a rim of ancient trees), 2025. Acrylic and acrylic spray on linen. 75 x 100 in, 190.5 x 254 cm (LTO25.020)



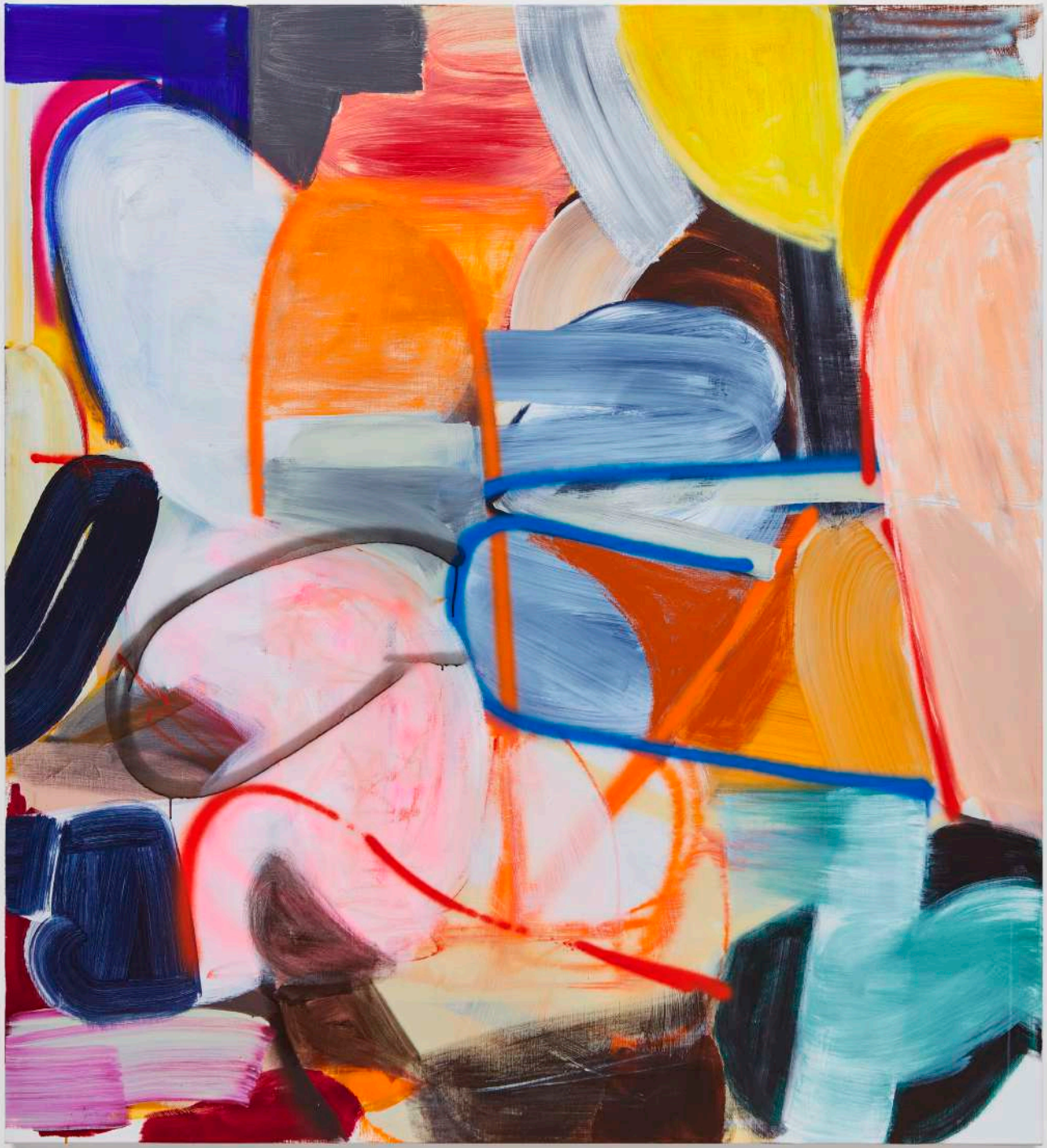
POEM THING (you watch: and the lands divide from you), 2025
Acrylic and acrylic aspray on linen
75 x 50 in
190.5 x 127 in
(LTO25.024)



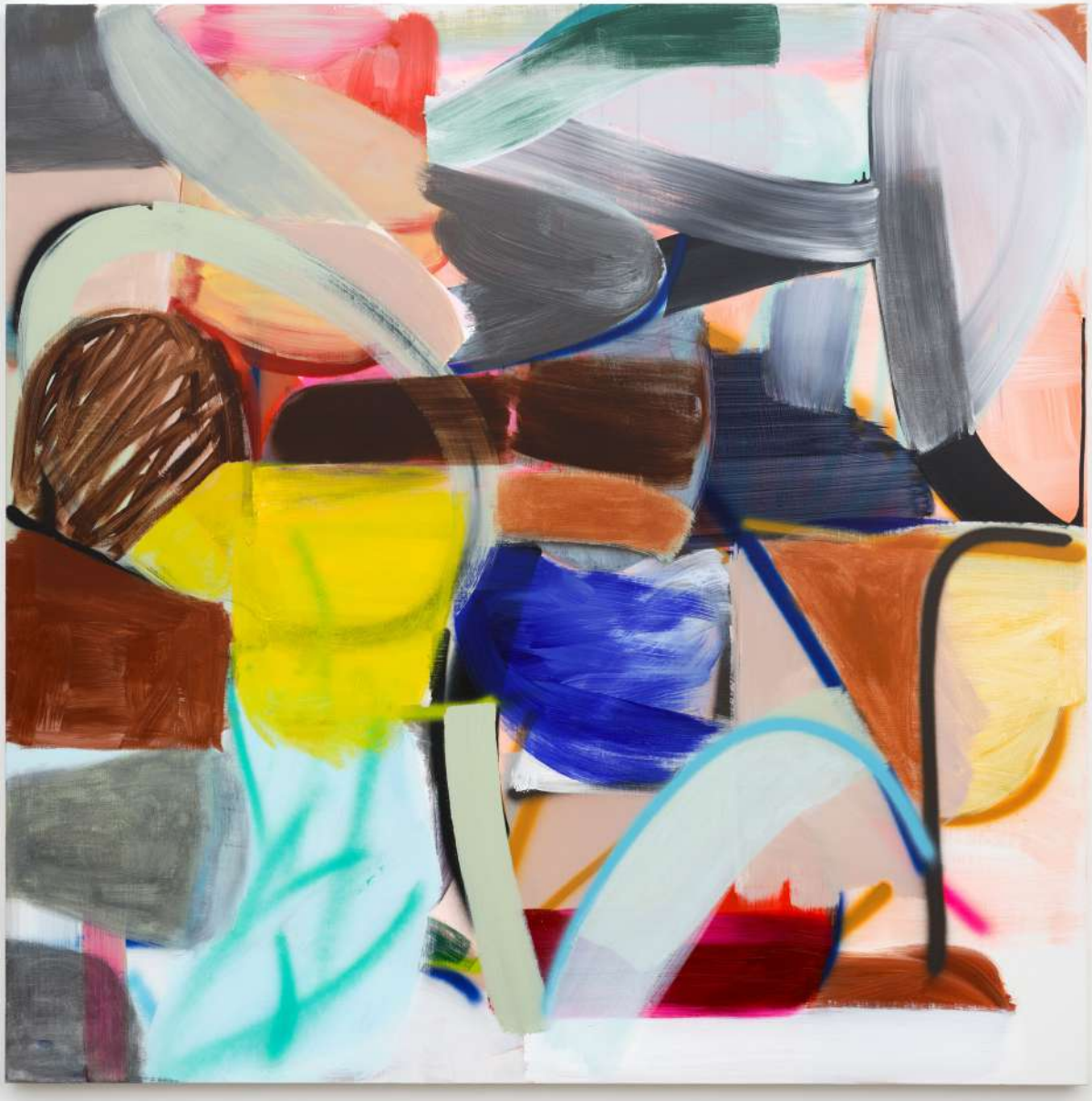
POEM THING (one going hevenward, one that falls), 2025
Acrylic and acrylic spray on linen
60 x 40 in
152.4 x 101.6 cm
(LTO25.021)



Psyche of the Portrait (Suite 7-12), 2025. Six individual works in oil pastel on paper. Each: 15 5/8 x 21 5/8 in, 39.6 x 54.9 cm (framed) (LTO25.030)

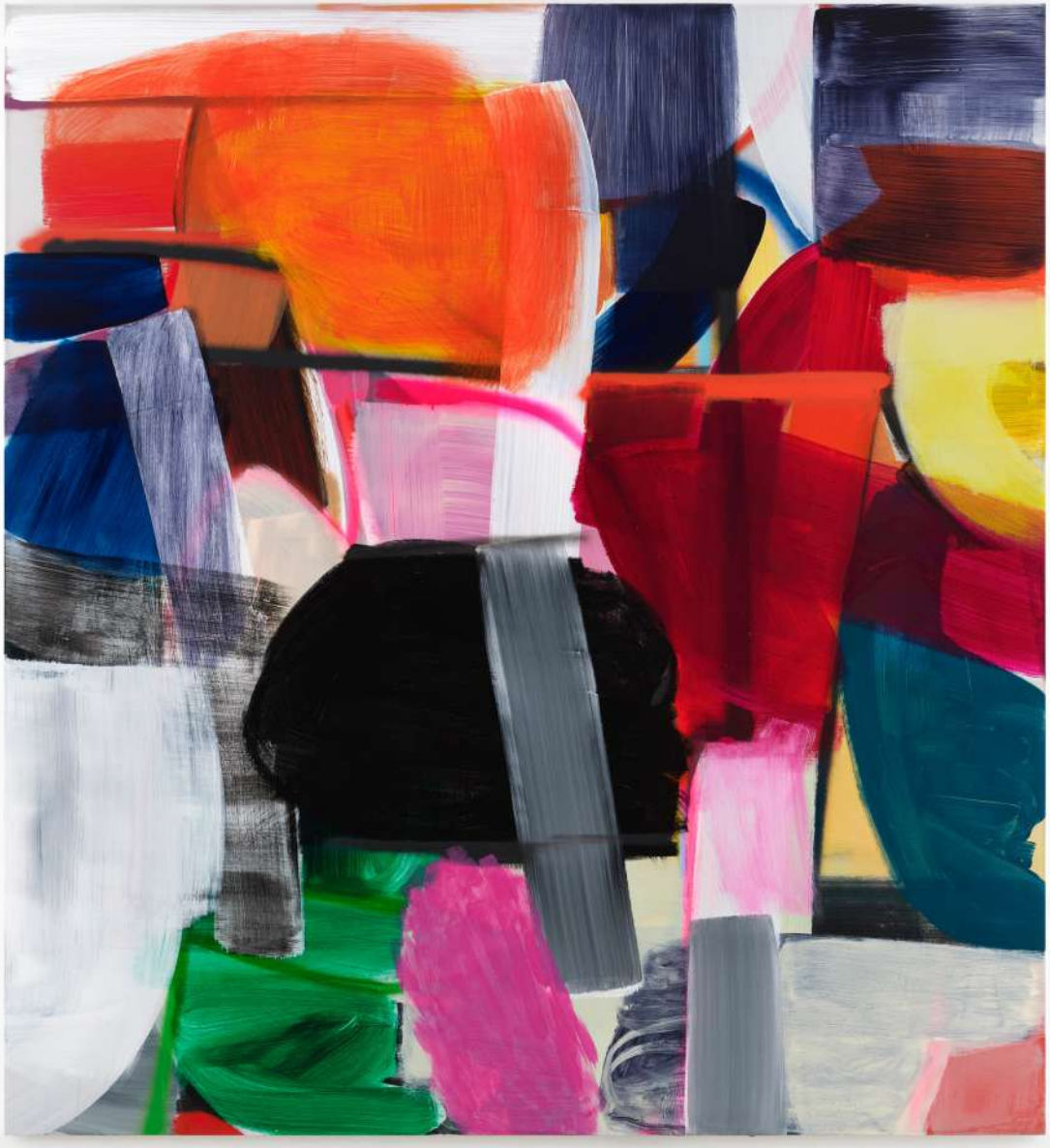


Portrait of the Self (at dusk, at dawn), 2023
Acrylic and acrylic spray on linen
68 x 62 in
172.7 x 157.5 cm
(LTO23.039)



Portrait of the Self (mimicking architecture), 2023
Acrylic and acrylic spray on linen
76 x 76 x 2 in
193 x 193 x 5.1 cm
(LTO23.037)



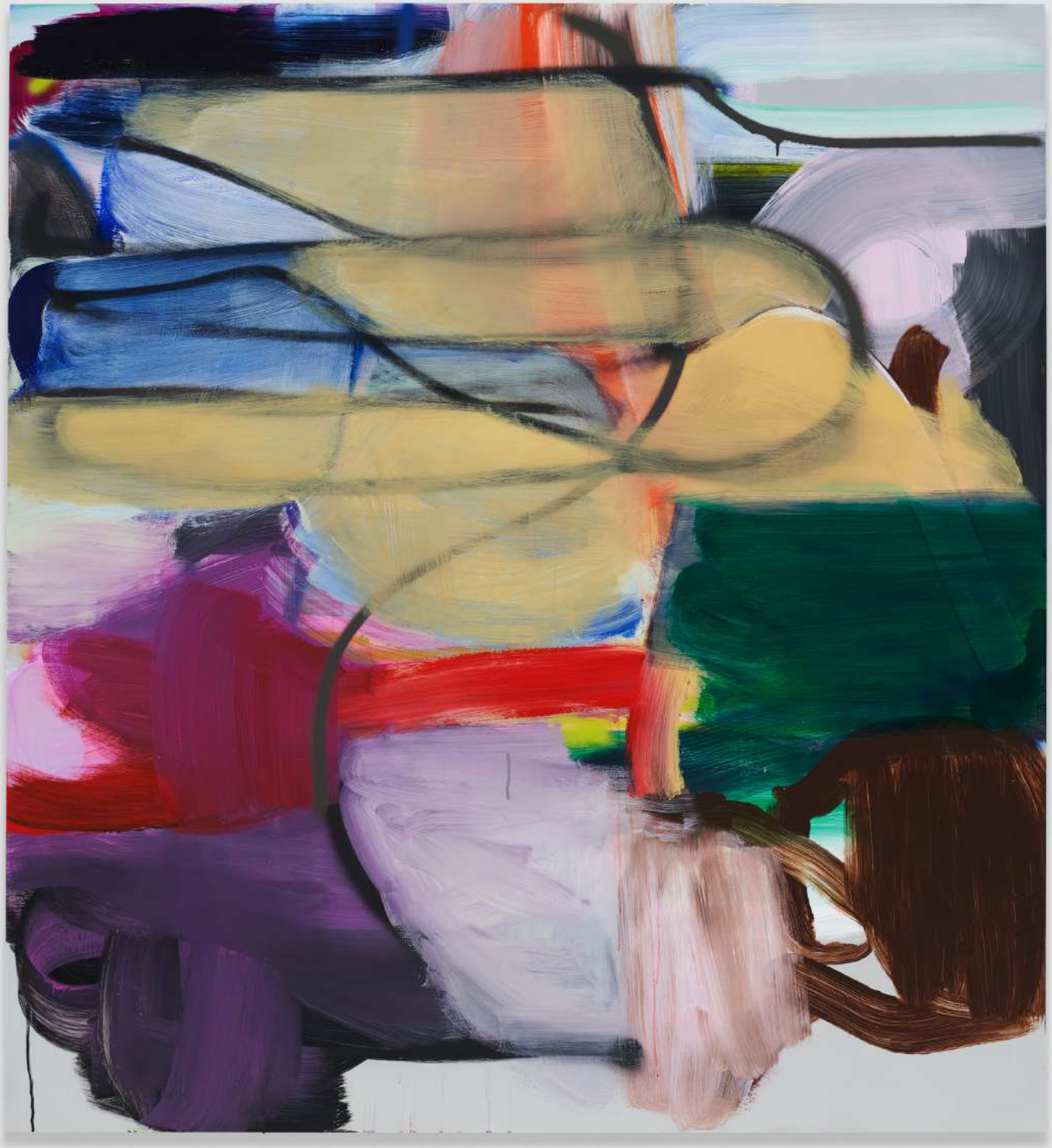


Portrait of the Self (weaving itself into existence), 2022
Acrylic and acrylic spray on aluminum
76 x 70 in
193 x 177.8 cm
(LTO23.017)

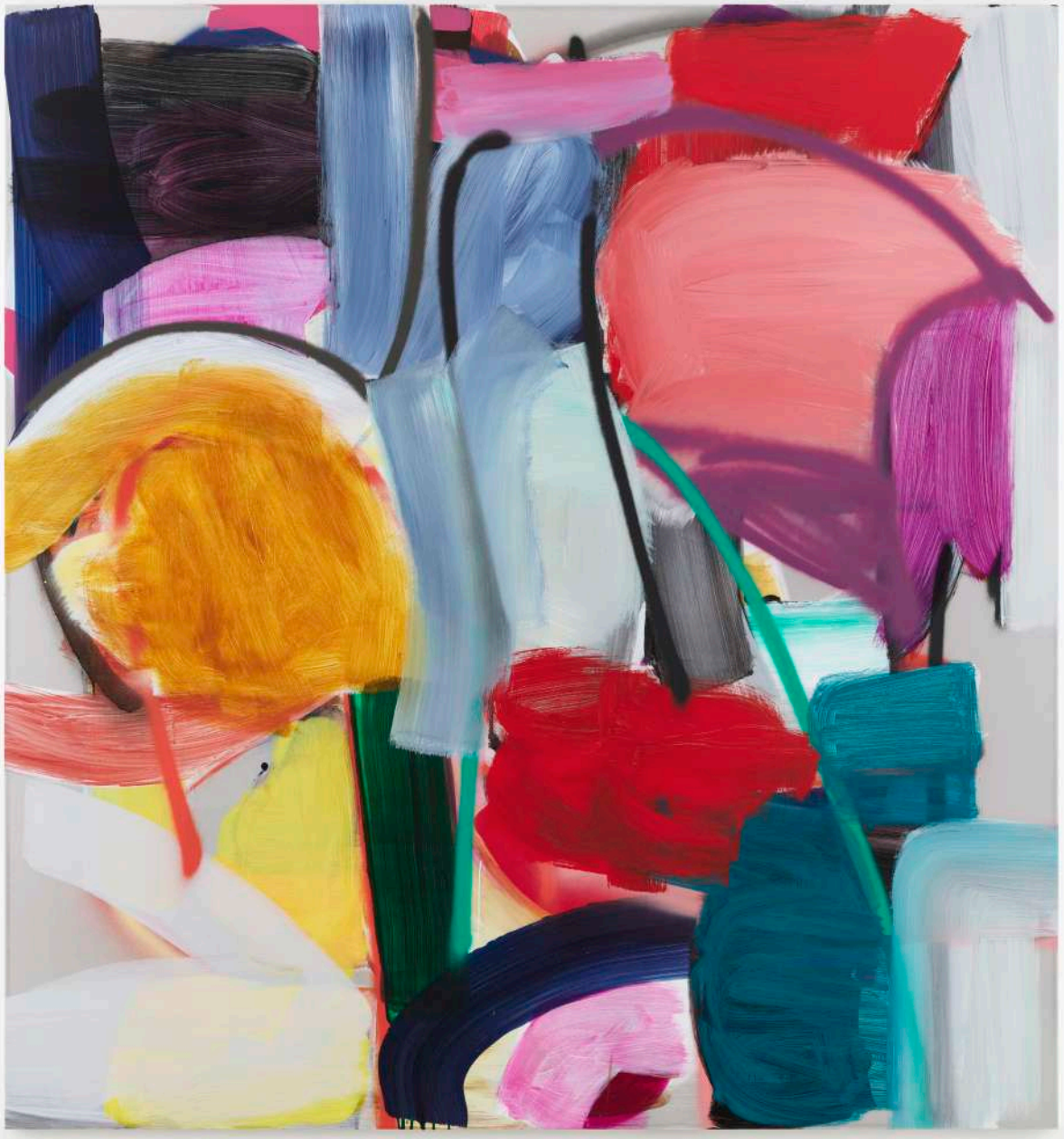


all that we need, 2022
Acrylic and acrylic spray on linen
76 x 76 in.
193 x 193 cm
(LTO22.001)





all that we trust, 2021
Acrylic and acrylic spray on aluminum
76 x 70 in
193 x 177.8 cm
(LTO22.003)



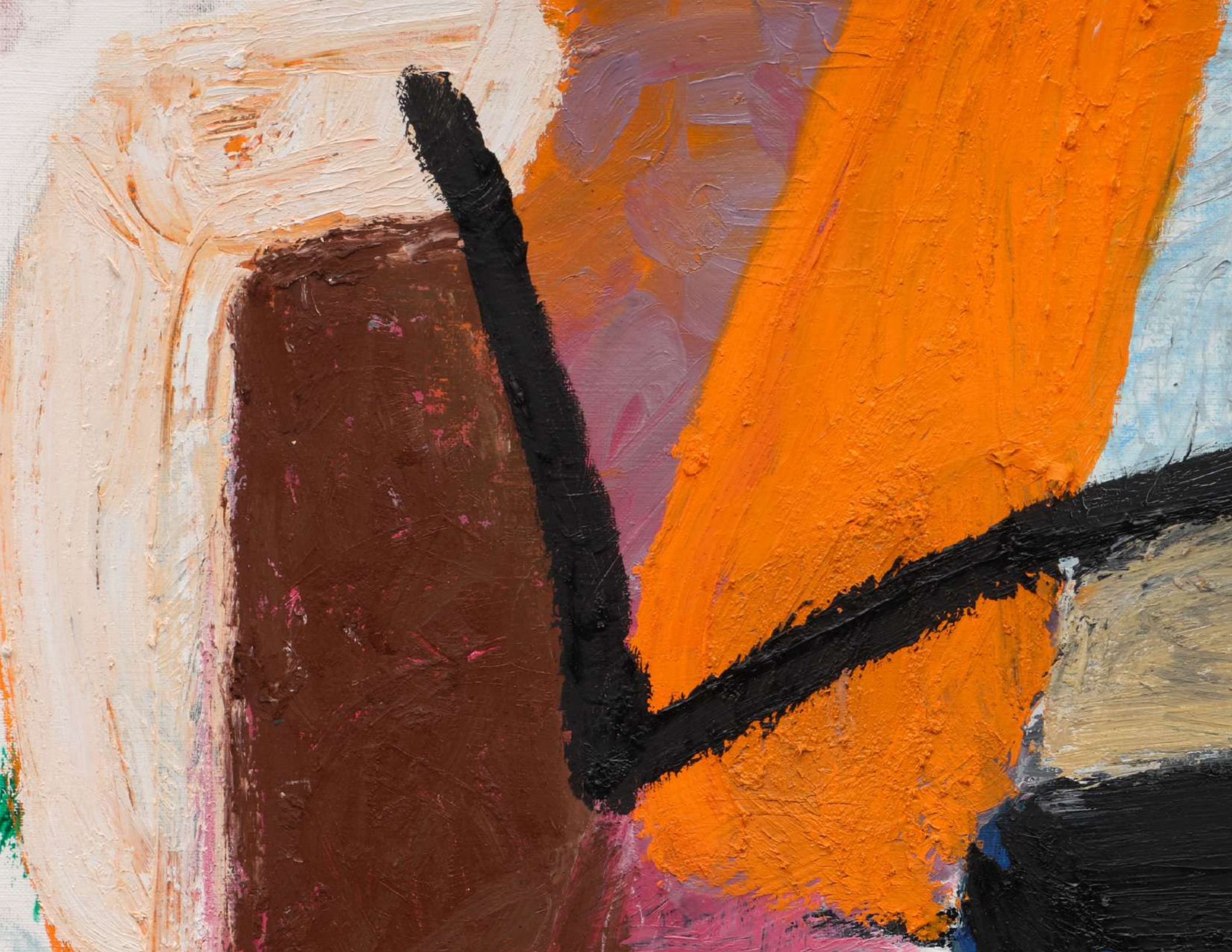
Portrait of the Self (holding up the middle), 2022. Acrylic and acrylic spray on aluminum. 76 x 70 in. 193 x 177.8 cm (LTO23.012)

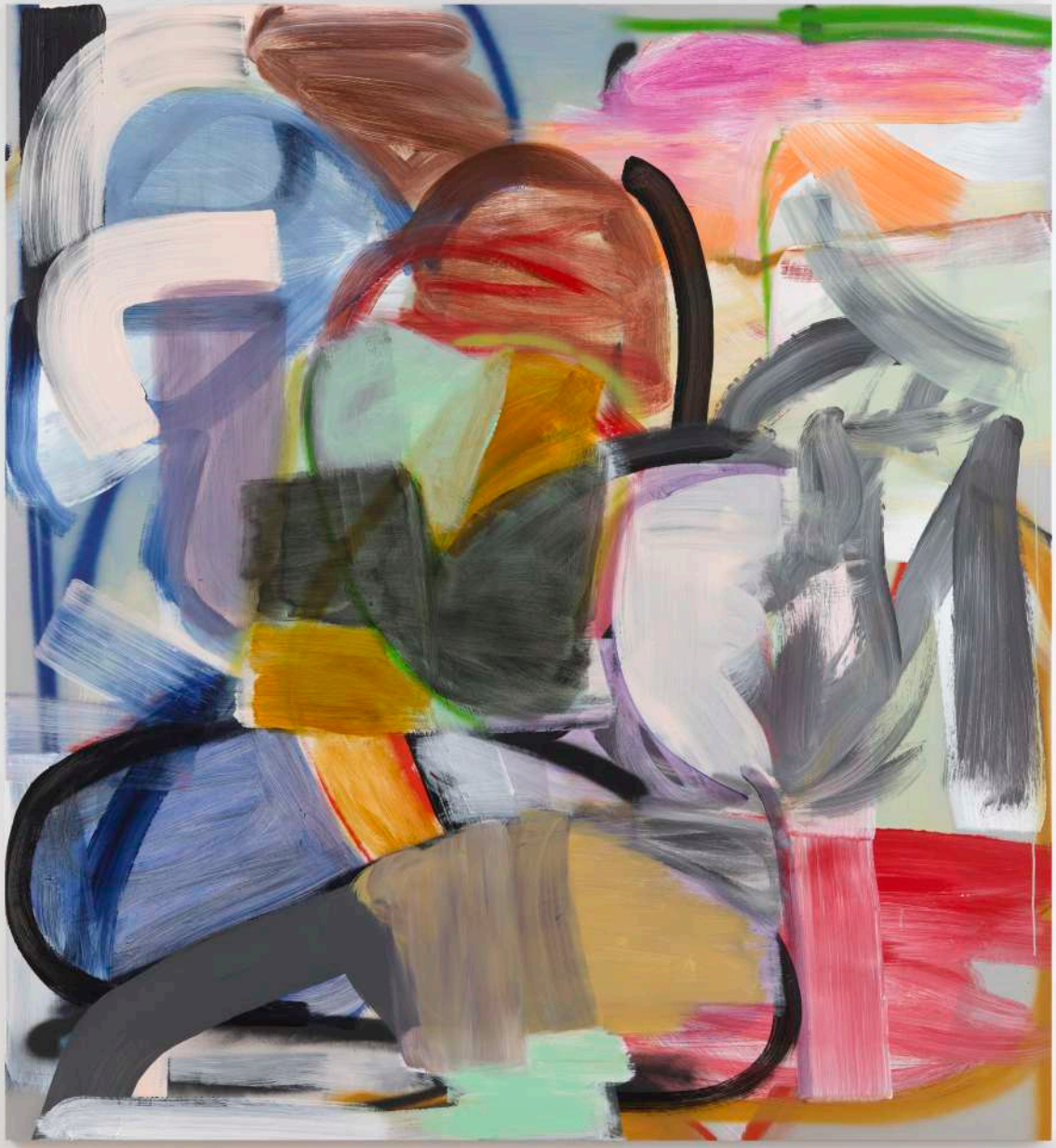


all that we lose, 2022
Acrylic and acrylic spray on linen
76 x 76 in
193 x 193 cm
(LTO22.005)



Portrait of the Self (looking for clues), 2022
Acrylic and oil stick painting on canvas paper
28 3/4 x 24 3/4 x 1 5/8 in (framed)
73 x 62.9 x 4.1 cm (framed)
(LTO23.020)





Portrait of the Self (frantically rearranging its parts), 2023
Acrylic and acrylic spray on aluminum
76 x 70 in
193 x 177.8 cm
(LTO23.021)



COMPRESSION MARCH, 2023
Acrylic and acrylic spray on paper
62 1/2 x 42 1/2 x 1 1/2 in (framed)
158.8 x 108 x 3.8 cm (framed)
(LTO23.007)



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS AND PROJECTS

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS AND PROJECTS

POEM THINGS
2025
NINO MIER GALLERY
NEW YORK, NY

LILIANE TOMASKO: THE PSYCHE OF THE PORTRAIT
2025
MILLENIUM GALLERY, SHEFFIELD MUSEUMS
SHEFFIELD, UK

TWOFOLD
2024
KERLIN GALLERY
DUBLIN, IE

PORTRAIT OF THE SELF
2023
NINO MIER GALLERY
LOS ANGELES, CA, US

AUSTRIA - GERMANY, PAINTING 1970 to 2020
2023
THE ALBERTINA MUSEUM
VIENNA, AT

NAME ME NOT
2023
CENTRO DE ARTE CAJA DE BURGOS CAB
BURGOS, ES



POEM THINGS

2025
NINO MIER GALLERY
NEW YORK, NY

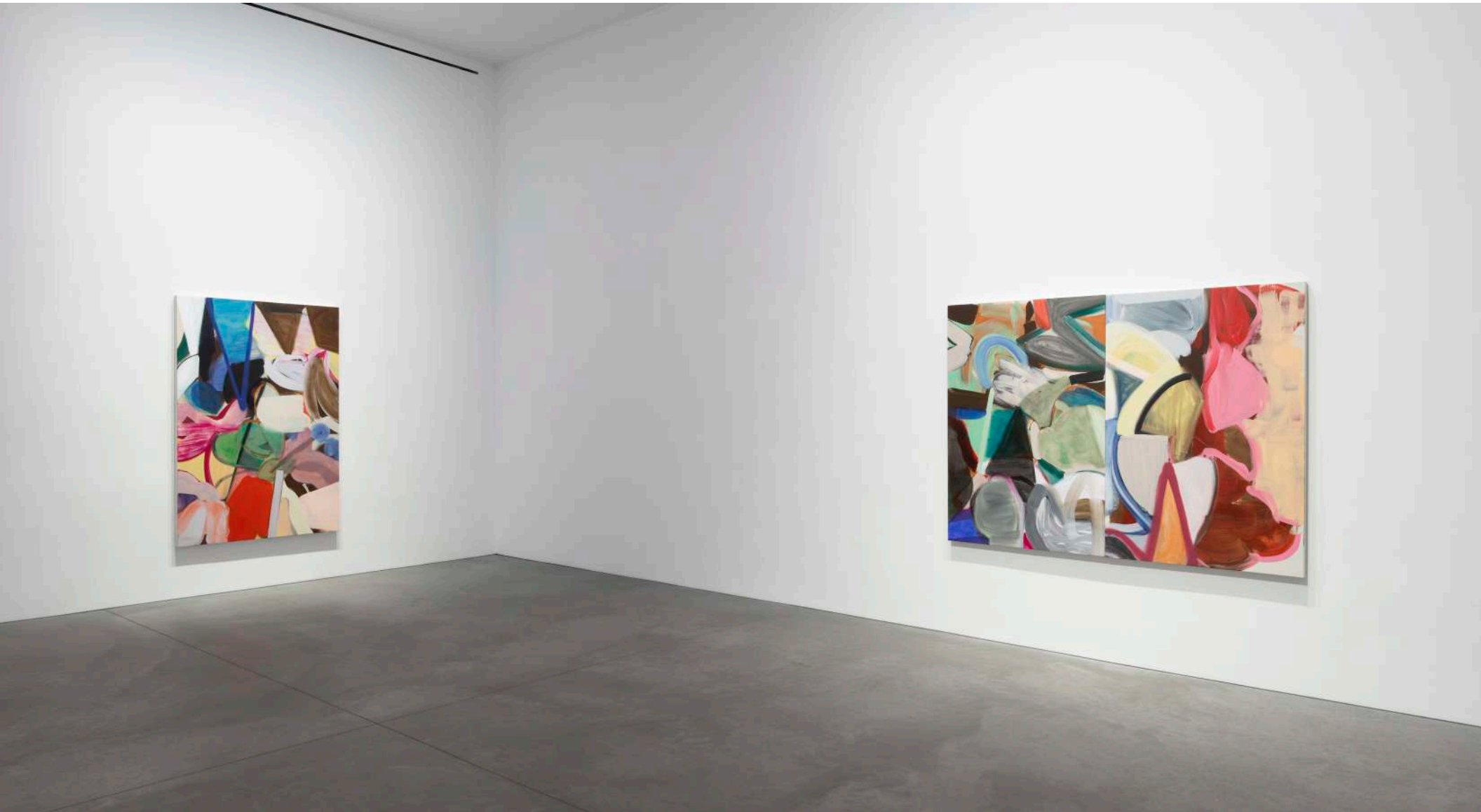
Nino Mier Gallery is delighted to announce *POEM THINGS*, Liliane Tomasko's inaugural solo exhibition at its 62 Crosby Street location in New York, running from September 3 to October 18, 2025.

The exhibition's title draws from the German concept of *Dinggedicht* ("poem of things" or "thing poem"), which focuses on imbuing objects with their own voice and significance. Tomasko's paintings aim to transcend abstract forms, creating a dialogue between painting, poetry, and the world. Following her critically acclaimed 2023 exhibition *Portrait of the Self* in Los Angeles, *POEM THINGS* showcases Tomasko's distinct abstract approach to painting, where literature serves as a crucial element.

For this series, Tomasko embeds fragments of Rainer Maria Rilke's poem "Evening" from *The Book of Images* (1902) as painting subtitles, inviting viewers into a realm of poetic synesthesia where free association is key. In this way, and inspired by such modernists as Vassily Kandinsky and Willem de Kooning, Tomasko's art defies conventional categories.

The diptych *POEM THING (Slowly the evening puts on the garments held for it by a rim of ancient trees)* resonates with Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception. The painting visually embodies psychosomatic sensations, blurring the lines between internal experience (evoked by gestural red marks in the left panel) and the external world (represented by sky blue shades in the right panel). This interplay reflects Merleau-Ponty's "chiasm," where subject and object are intertwined, emphasizing the lived body as the foundation of experience and painterly expression. Tomasko's incorporation of vibrant colors and expressive gesture with Rilke's verse encourages contemplation of the intricate relationship between inner sensations and external perception, engaging the viewer's visceral, and thus embodied, experience.

An avid reader with an affinity for language and words, Tomasko's titles have consistently hinted at a literary bent, using her own prose. This literary connection became even more prominent in her 2024 project titled *The Artist's Eye* held in Dublin. There, she strategically integrated the words of Charles Dickens as a significant and socially engaged constituent within her own exhibition text that accompanied the paintings. Now, with *POEM THINGS*, Tomasko embarks on a new chapter, interweaving abstract mark-making and fragments of Rilke's verse. This creates a powerful dialogue between painting's visual elements and metaphoric synesthesia, challenging the norms of abstract painting by offering a potent pathway for engaging with art on a highly subjective and phenomenological level.







All images courtesy of Millenium Gallery



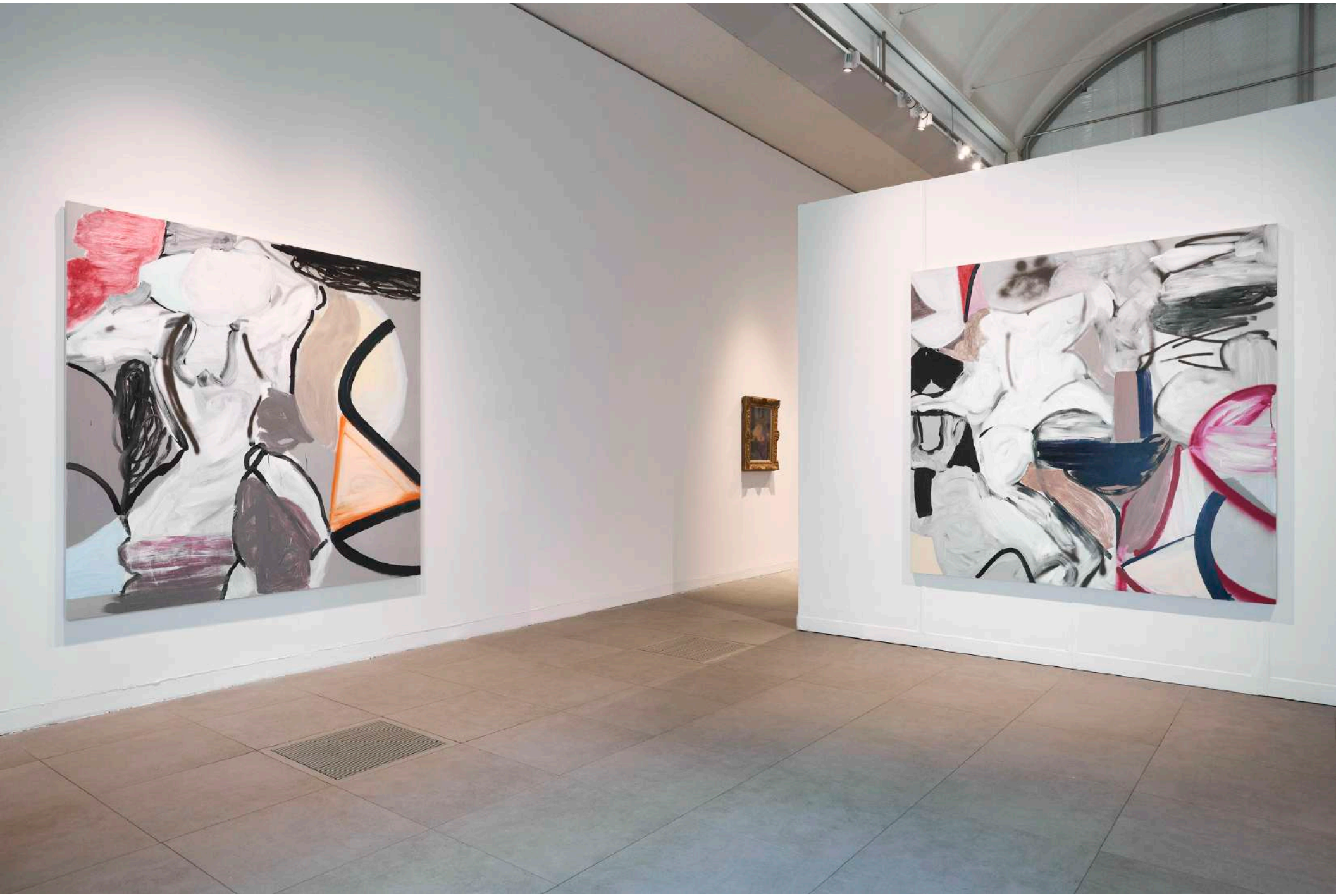
POEM THINGS LILIANE TOMASKO: PSYCHE OF THE PORTRAIT

2025
MILLENIUM GALLERY, SHEFFIELD MUSEUMS
SHEFFIELD, UK

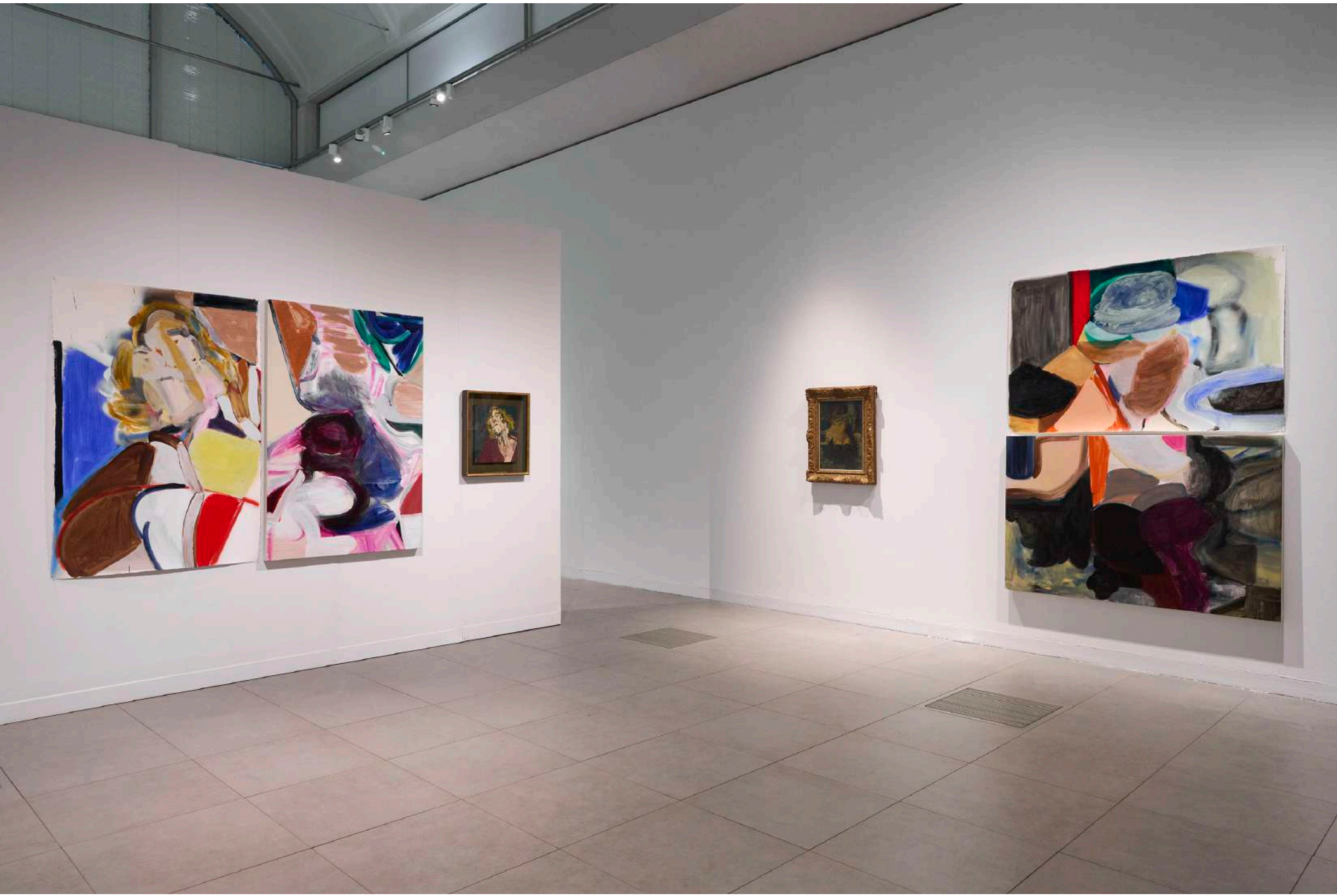
The Psyche of the Portrait sees New York-based visual artist Liliane Tomasko respond to examples of portraiture from Sheffield's Visual Art collection with her own abstract vocabulary. Shedding light on the ever-changing human psyche, the exhibition presents new work by Tomasko directly responding to portraits by Frank Auerbach, Pierre Bonnard, Kees Van Dongen, and Eduardo Paolozzi.

An abiding interest in the subconscious runs as a thread through the work of Liliane Tomasko – whether interrogating the uncanny of the seeming emptiness of the corner of a room, to the rumpled sheets of a slept-in bed, her dynamic, sweeping brushstrokes converge to erase, transcend, interrogate, or reframe any recognisable origins. For *The Psyche of the Portrait*, Tomasko takes a bold new direction, responding to four specific portraits she has chosen that are in, or on loan to, Sheffield's collection.

What emerges in Tomasko's new paintings, created especially for the exhibition, deftly draws parallels between the creation of those original works and the historical development of psychological study in the 20th century. Together, they question the psychological power dynamics of artist and sitter, query the role of the subconscious in the creative act, and reimagine parables in the context of our 21st-century anxieties.







All images courtesy of Kerlin Gallery.



TWOFOLD

2024
KERLIN GALLERY
DUBLIN, IE

Kerlin Gallery is pleased to announce Twofold, an exhibition of new paintings by Liliane Tomasko.

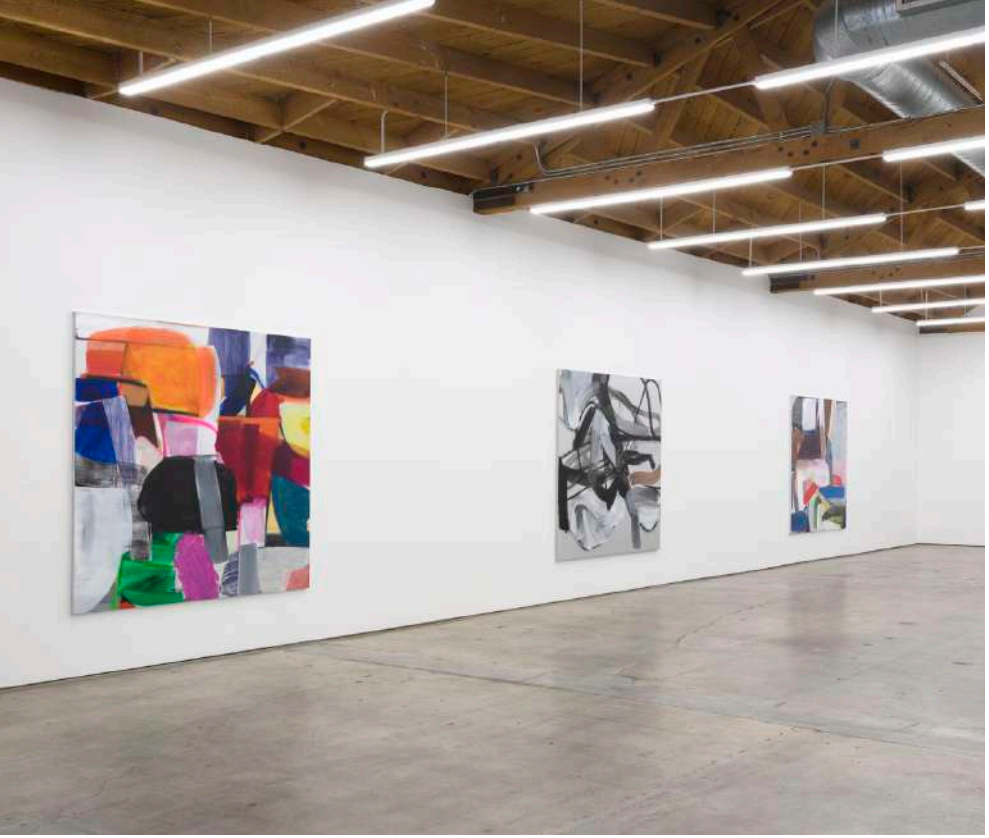
In Twofold, Liliane Tomasko's distinctive, bold lyricism and assertive sense of colour unfold across five new diptychs on aluminium and linen. Opening up spatial possibility, this format allows tone, form and texture to dialogue back and forth across surfaces, sparking new resonances and shaping our understanding of each panel in relation to its neighbour. These paintings must negotiate two distinct voices – sometimes finding harmony, elsewhere tension; forging complex relationships that actively engage the viewer. "To confront these monumental diptychs of Tomasko is to enter a garden of forking paths, a forest of signs," writes critic Raphy Sarkissian in a newly commissioned text. "Diaphanous and opaque forms coexist within these enigmatic diptychs."

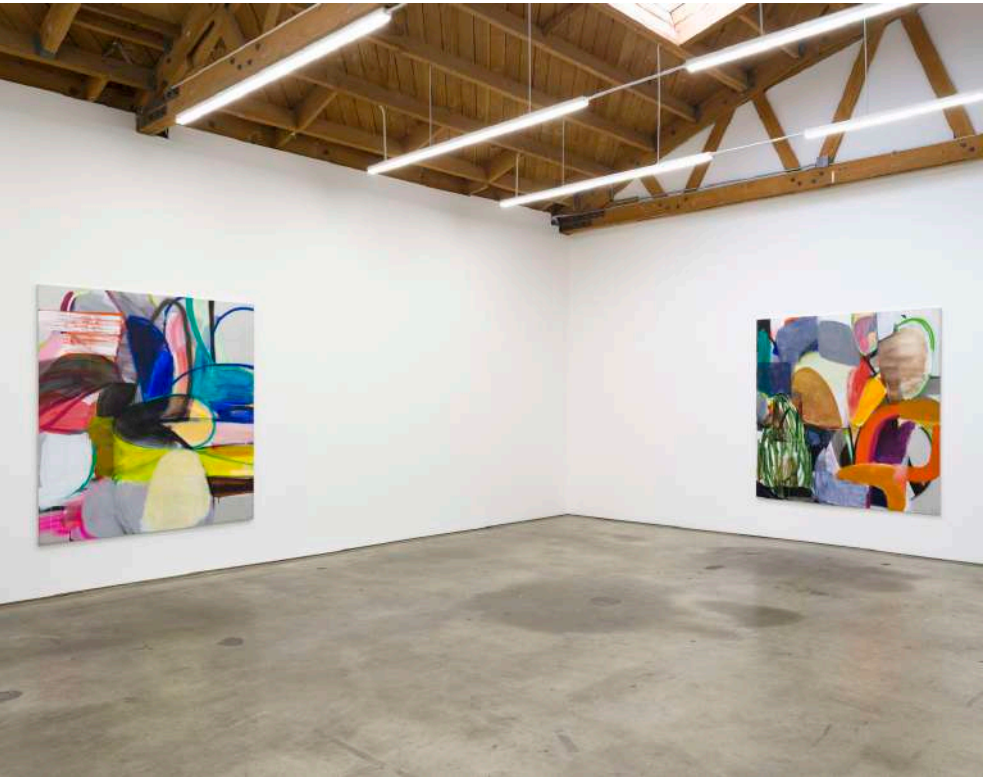
Like much of Tomasko's oeuvre, the works in Twofold appear abstract but bear deep and tangled connections to the pictorial and narrative worlds. Larger shapes, suggestive of figures, come in and out of focus, fragmenting and coming back together in the mind's eye. The work is also shaped by the artist's longstanding interest in mythologies, particularly narratives of equilibrium and justice, such as the ancient concept of the weighing of the soul. Tomasko's enquiry into form, colour and shape, and the profound emotional resonances they can imbue, is continued in a new series of works on paper. Each one offers a discordant web of colour and line; a denser counterpoint to the expansive duality of the diptychs. Together, the works in Twofold offer a luminous excavation of the human psyche.











PORTRAIT OF THE SELF

2023
NINO MIER GALLERY
LOS ANGELES, CA, US

Nino Mier Gallery is thrilled to present *Portrait of the Self*, Liliane Tomasko's first exhibition with the gallery. Spanning Galleries 1 & 2 in West Hollywood, the exhibition will feature a recent suite of lyrical, large-scale paintings and works on paper exploring the internal realities of selfhood—how glimmers of the self, always in flux, can be accessed through color and form. Portrait of the Self will run from June 3 to August 12, 2023.

Portrait of the Self cultivates a sense of intimacy and corporeality absent of its figural representation. Throughout the exhibition, Tomasko distills her paintings to a focused meditation on color, shape, and texture. The resulting works are engrossing, multicolored arrangements of sweeping, curvilinear brushstrokes and other irregular forms. Each gesture is applied with varying degrees of opacity, creating a palimpsest-like effect, wherein the initial stages of the painting are visible between later-stage brushstrokes. Negative space creates the illusion of pictorial space and depth, which is furthered by changing tonalities and light.

Each work harnesses the expressive power of the fundamental qualities of painting, thereby using abstraction to conjure distinct emotional and psychological states. Given the works are framed as "portraits of the self," Tomasko asks viewers to consider what notion of the self these compositions depict. For Tomasko, the self is inchoate and capricious; its portraits, therefore, do not refer to representational images of a person, but rather articulate a panoply of subconscious moments moving between memory and feeling.

In *Portrait of the Self*, Tomasko presents viewers with many of what the artist has called "registers of visceral subjectivity," marking a new phase in Tomasko's explorations of the more intangible features of experience and identity. Past work centered on evocations of the textures, fabrics, and atmospheres of domestic interiors. Based upon close-up polaroids taken by the artist of clothes belonging to absent others, used mattresses, slept-in bedsheets, and light-filtering curtains, her paintings brought inspired attention to the traces and impressions of life visible in the materials left in one's wake. In Portrait of the Self, Tomasko presents the latest installment in her more recent investigation of immaterial reality: dreams, reveries, and their shaping of inner life.






LILIANE TOMASKO
PORTRAIT OF THE SELF





AUSTRIA - GERMANY PAINTING 1970 to 2020

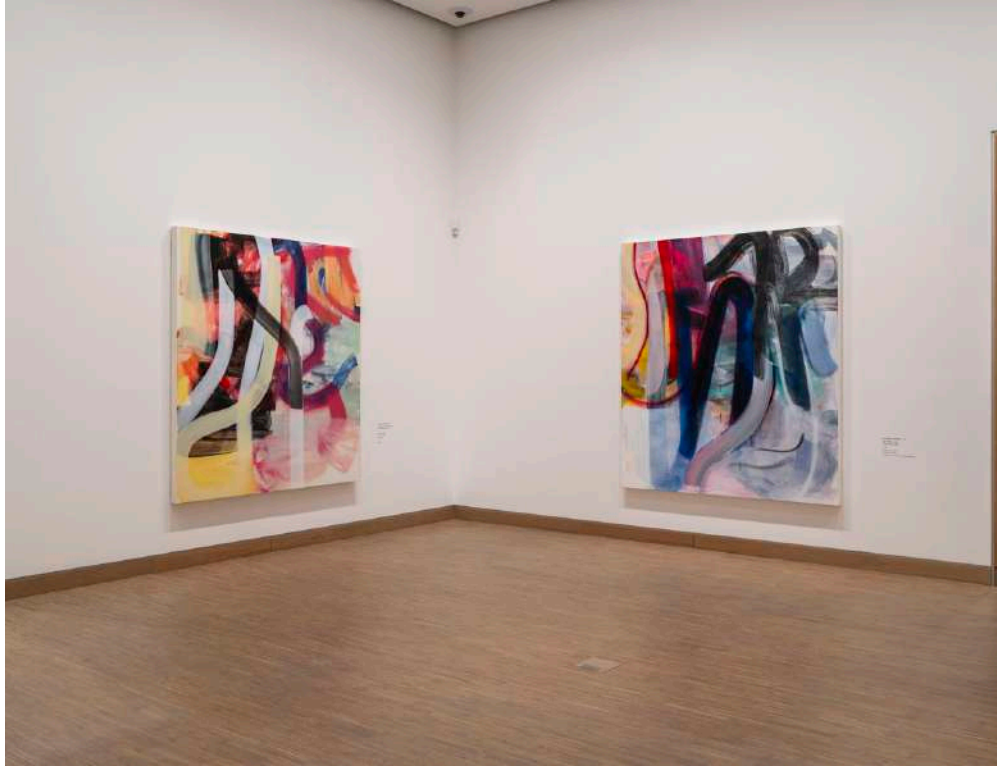
2023
THE ALBERTINA MUSEUM
VIENNA, AT

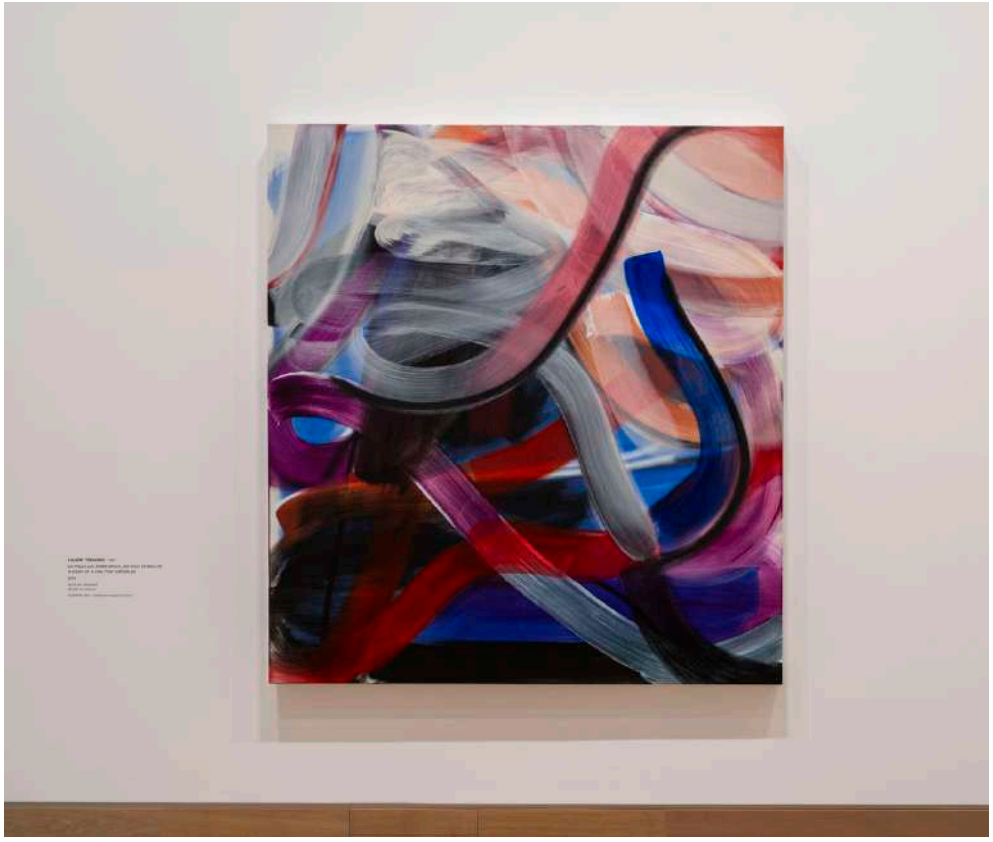
As in football, so in art? No. Certainly not. The relationship between Germany and Austria in the visual arts is completely different from that in sport: there are no hard fronts, no competition, no winners and losers, no young and old.

The autumn exhibition at ALBERTINA MODERN is dedicated to outstanding artists from both countries, who are linked by a long history. However, it does not thematise this history, but instead allows important positions in the Albertina's collection, such as Maria Lassnig and Georg Baselitz, Arnulf Rainer and Gerhard Richter, Martha Jungwirth and Albert Oehlen, Xenia Hausner and Neo Rauch, Wolfgang Hollegha and Katharina Grosse to enter into a convincing dialogue.

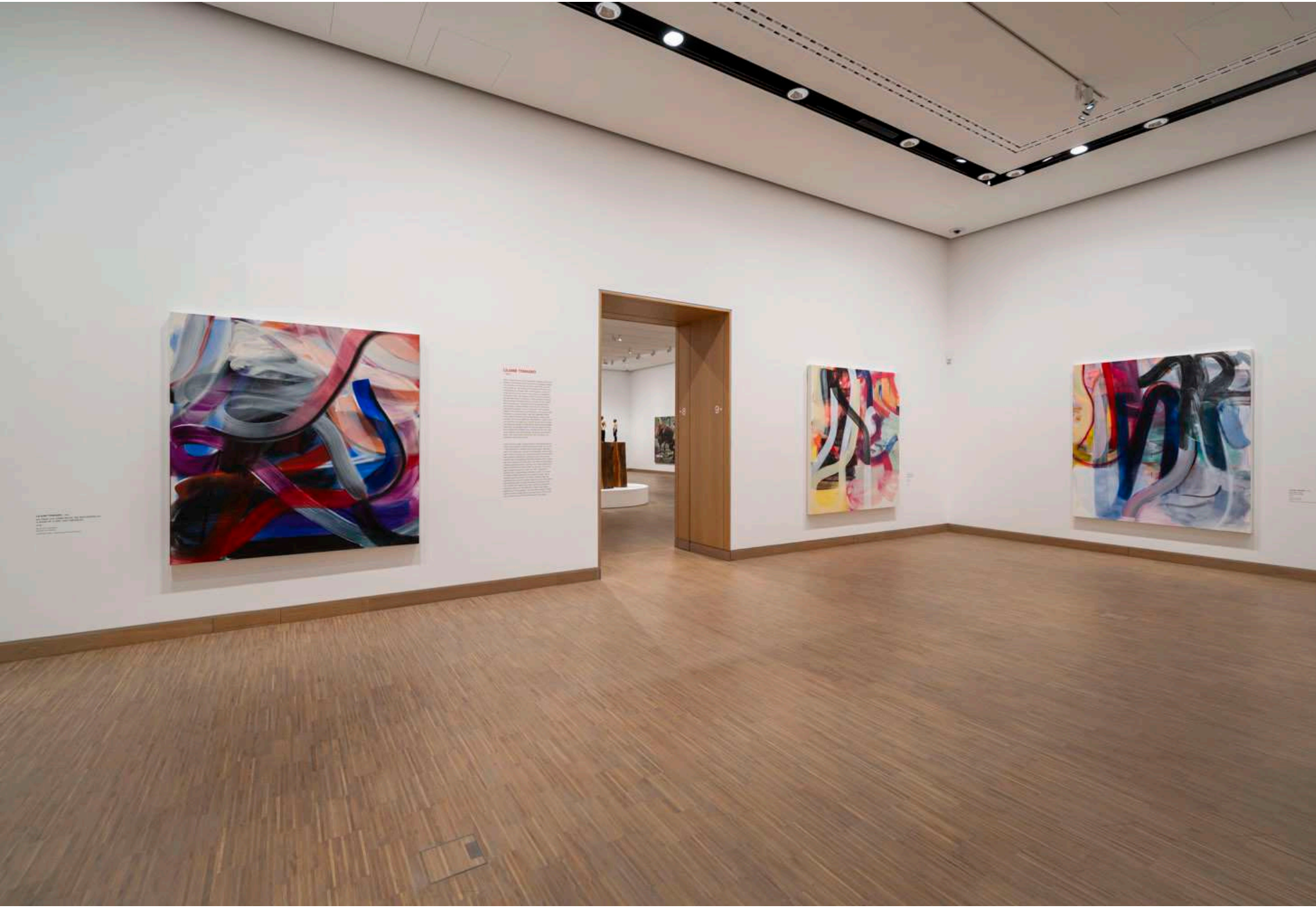
A surprising pas de deux unfolds away from the principle of nationality, bringing the dance and playfulness of art to the fore. Both the German and the Austrian positions come into their own in their individuality. Together they develop a transformative power and triumph with an aesthetic of harmonies, tensions and ruptures.

Group exhibition, featuring three of Tomasko's paintings from the museum's collection.





Courtesy of : The Albertina Museum, Vienna
Installation views: Austria - Germany Painting 1970 - 2020, Vienna, Austria, 2023.




LILIANE TOMASKO



NAME ME NOT

2023
CENTRO DE ARTE CONTEMPORANEO DE BURGOS (CAB)
BURGOS, ES

Liliane Tomasko employs a very different way of reflecting the inside of ourselves in what she calls the “record of a visceral subjectivity.” “The subconscious is an unstable beast, and does not want to be reasoned or conquered.” The night emerges as a pictorial territory crossed by a misshapen magma.

Beneath the surface of the tangible world “we know that there is something else, a dark matter that shapes our lives and our actions, our interactions with the world we live in,” the author tells us. A set of large paintings, as luminaires expanded in an infinite landscape, will articulate the exhibition path of the proposal of Liliane Tomasko (Zurich, 1967) in the CAB.

Next to them, a series of vertical paintings affect who we are, what we have, what we feel and what we want; while another set of works investigates more decidedly in the world of dreams. That recourse to the unconscious submerged in sleep, but also to its most emotional and sensitive part, is plastically resolved in a painting in which the strokes overflow the surface and resemble a panorama open to the inner structure of thought.

Night and the dream associated with it emerges as a pictorial territory crossed by a misshapen magma, tangled and feverish at times, arrested and expectant at others. The generous lines that seem to hold like a net everything that happens inside the frame resemble a neural map connected only in its most irrational part. Every gesture, every stain, every scratch of Tomasko´s paintings evidences our own brain scratches that are only revealed in states of mental suspension.

Although in her first work the proximity to the figure was still perceptible, in the works that Tomasko presents in the CAB it is only possible to build an approximate story after identifying the titles assigned to the paintings. Name me not [“do not name me”, but also “tell me nothing”] suggests a gloomy, ambiguous universe and a fearful point that the artist places in the field of the unfathomable, of the captive, of an interior that is only possible to show with the strength, decision and dynamism of a vital and transcendent painting with which the author interrogates us: do we not urgently need to address the question of the self, of who and what we are?



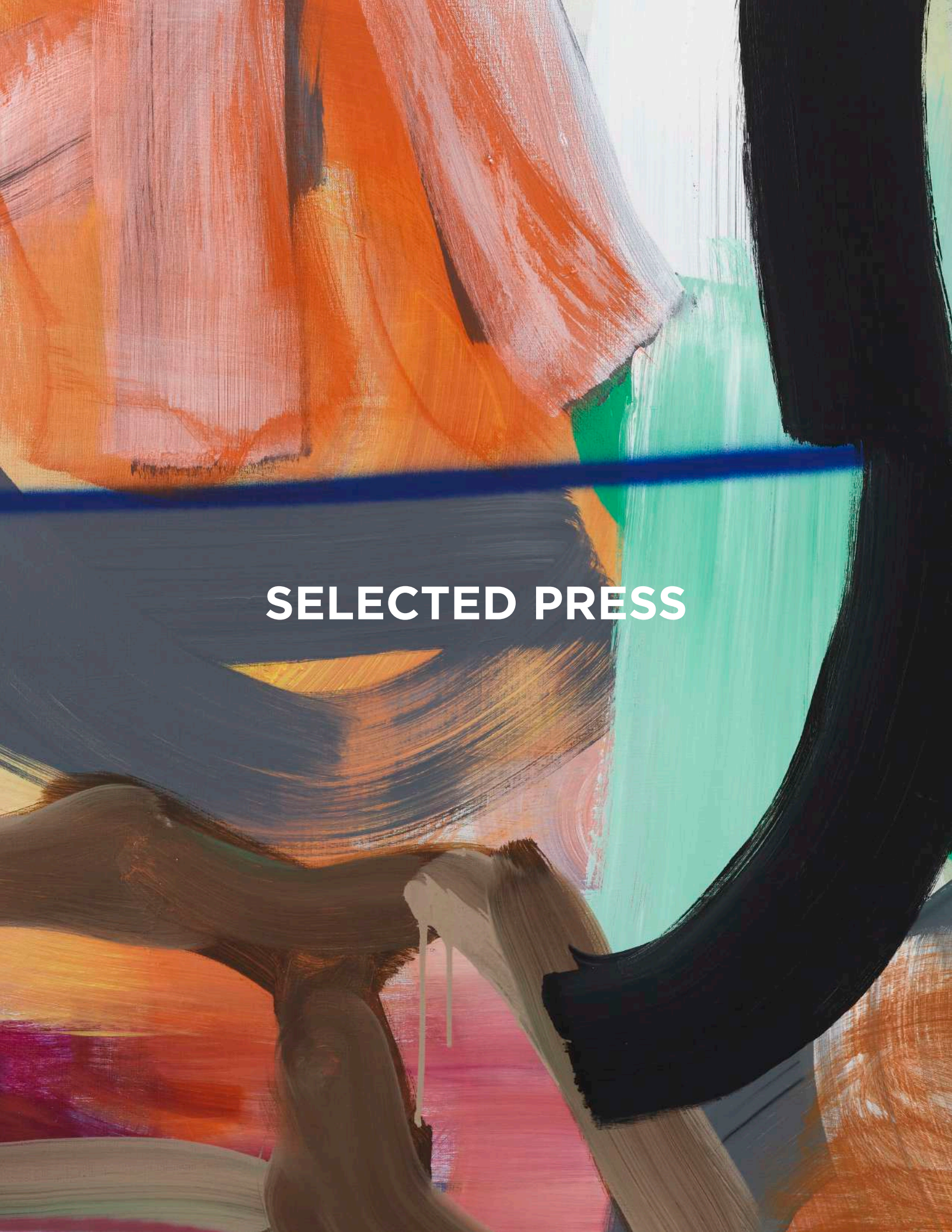


All images courtesy of the artist and Centro de Arte Caja de Burgos CAB. Photography by Jorge Martín Muñoz.
Installation view: Liliane Tomasko: Name Me Not, Centro de Arte Caja de Burgos CAB, Spain, 2023.









SELECTED PRESS

SELECTED PRESS

THE BROOKLYN RAIL
NOVEMBER 2024
BY DECLAN LONG

THE BROOKLYN RAIL
JUNE 2024
BY RAPHY SARKISSIAN

THE BROOKLYN RAIL
MARCH 2023
BY PHONG BUI

BOOKFORUM
DECEMBER 2022
BY K.S.

THE IRISH TIMES
JULY 2022
BY AIDAN DUNNE

THE BROOKLYN RAIL
JUNE 2022
BY RAPHY SARKISSIAN

ARTFORUM
JUNE 2021
BY JENS ASTHOFF

THE BROOKLYN RAIL
APRIL 2021
BY DAVID CARRIER

THE BROOKLYN RAIL

NOVEMBER 2024

Liliane Tomasko: *Twofold*

By Declan Long



Installation view: Liliane Tomasko: Twofold, Kerlin Gallery, Dublin, 2024. Courtesy Kerlin Gallery. Photo: Lee Welch.

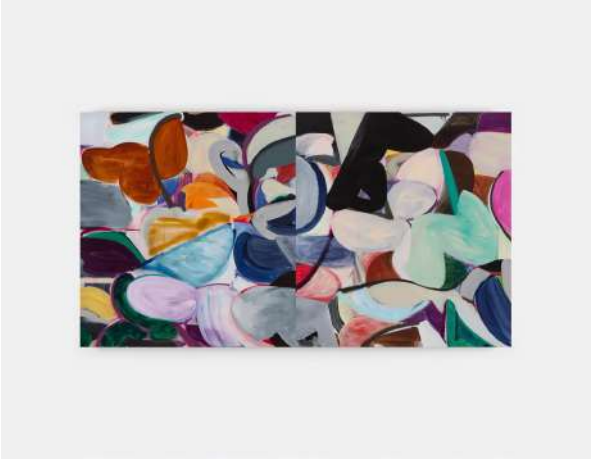
Liliane Tomasko's paintings often begin from unassuming domestic sources: rumpled bed sheets, bundles of laundry, the familiar fabrics that cover our bodies or clutter our homes. She is frequently drawn to the physical idiosyncrasies of slept-in, lived-in textiles, considering how they feel to the touch, how they fall together into accidental arrangements, folding, creasing, wrinkling, overlapping in happenstance ensembles of mismatched shapes and colors. But just as the loosely woven patterns of her abstract paintings have emerged, in part, from these ongoing habits of household phenomenology—a practice of mindful immersion in the felt details of matter-of-fact domesticity—Tomasko's work is also attuned to other dimensions of experience. Resting her gaze on the mundane reality of tossed-and-turned bed sheets, Tomasko reflects, by association, on the restless unreality of dreams. Contemplating the managed muddle of ordinary home-life, she remains alert to the tensions and attractions of life beyond. Within each painting's luminous warp and weft, contrasting influences are threaded together.



Liliane Tomasko, *Mirror, Mirror, On that Wall*, 2024. Acrylic and acrylic spray on linen, two panels, 68 × 124 inches. Courtesy the artist and Kerlin Gallery. Photo: Lee Welch.

Five large acrylic-on-aluminium paintings form the core of Tomasko's latest exhibition at Kerlin Gallery. All were made at her London studio over the course of the past year—and all are diptychs, of a distinct kind. Working on squarish panels (their scale ranging from five-feet to over six-feet tall, the height marginally greater than the width), Tomasko creates, in each case, a dense, multi-coloured miscellany of serpentine strips and abutting blobs. Some compositions establish a provisional, easeful decorum: heaps of softly curved, self-contained shapes, slumped and bunched like pillows on a couch or fruit spilling from a bowl. Others are insistently entangled: evincing, in the swirl and scrawl of their crowded, knotty designs, more agitated artistic energies. One by one, as a first step, Tomasko approached these as stand-alone paintings. Step two was a process of pairing up incidental affinities or points of productive difference, then matching each panel with a partner. The juxtapositions are tightly enjambed visual couplets: one packed box of line, shape and color joined side-to-side with another, the boundary between them either barely legible as one motley array bleeds into the next, or more markedly evident—catching the eye, signalling a break.

Duality is central to this body of work—but not polarity. The calculated doubleness of these split-screen paintings is less about strong distinctions than degrees of difference. Certainly, between parts, we can detect chromatic variations of hot and cold, dark and light; we see modifications of thick and thin, hard and soft, in the myriad brushstrokes. Yet such gradations are there too within individual panels. The experience as a viewer is to apprehend, across the wider expanse of the twinned paintings, a larger, richer range of shifts in formal intricacy and atmospheric intensity. Tomasko's diptychs bridge separate points in an evolving artistic process: bringing together earlier and later outcomes of her studio activity—showing us adjustments in mood, energy, and more. As such, the paintings are adjoined time-capsules of sensory and perceptual memory: connecting episodes in the mind's scramble of thoughts, apposing varied, in-the-moment responses to the world's tangle of pleasures and pressures.



Liliane Tomasko, *Un-Title-D*, 2024. Acrylic and acrylic spray on aluminium, two panels, 60 × 110 inches. Courtesy the artist and Kerlin Gallery. Photo: Lee Welch.

So, then, the exhibition's title, *Twofold*, advances a notion of doubleness that is (like the bedding and blankets that have long engaged her as primary subjects) overlapping, enwrapping, intimately layered. Inner and outer realities fold over and into their counterparts. One work's title, *Mirror, Mirror, On that Wall* (2024) pitches an idea of painting as near-magical manifestation of reflected individuality; yet within the bustling space of each parallel panel, we discover scrawly, wiry, spray-painted motifs that speak the visual language of the street: skinny lines that look like partial letter forms, or even fragments of lewd graffiti. The relative serenity of *Un-Title-D* (2024)—blooming with hints of mellow nature or Arcadian bliss (is that a butterfly on the top left, a reclining body on the bottom right?)—is nonetheless a scene made from artfully unsettled abstract oddments. As with other works in *Twofold*, Tomasko channels a buoyant mix of comfort and confusion. Such paintings, push-pulling in multiple directions, attest to the rigor of Tomasko's formal deliberations while also, repeatedly and variously, affirming her avid, hypersensitive interest in the infinite subtleties and inevitable anxieties of everyday existence.

THE BROOKLYN RAIL

JUNE 2024

Liliane Tomasko: *Shiftin Shapes*

By Raphy Sarkissian



Liliane Tomasko, *Shifting Shapes*, installation view. © Liliane Tomasko. Photo: Robert Kastowsky. Courtesy the artist and Bechter Kastowsky Gallery, Vienna.

These most recent paintings of Liliane Tomasko present abstraction as a conduit for self-reflexivity. Upon color-drenched surfaces, raw traces of paint and concealed brushwork give rise to visual spaces wherein maelstroms of undulating bands and illuminated forms incite yet halt recognizable imagery. Painted wet-into-wet, free-floating marks give way to veiled and unstructured masses poised in space. Translucence and opacity meld into one another. Gesturally executed contours intertwine within unfathomable pictorial spaces, where form and formlessness restrain the gestalt. This suspension of the legibility of forms redirects the abstraction of the paintings from their self-containment to the ontology of visual perception, where figuration and abstraction coexist within sight, reveries, and dreams. Titled *Shifting Shapes* as a group, these hauntingly lyrical works of Tomasko caress the interstices of vision, echoing the thoughts of Maurice Merleau-Ponty: "'Nature is on the inside,' says Cézanne. Quality, light, color, depth, which are there before us, are there only because they awaken an echo in our body and because the body welcomes them."1 These paintings of Tomasko reveal themselves as windows to a primordial world that is in an interminable process of entering our awareness.

Curved bands and accumulated layers of acrylic evoke choreographic movements of unidentifiable forms within an exterior world awash in light. Yet at the same time, Tomasko taps into the interior world of the body with her diaphanous brushmarks and spray-painted curls, recalling the mechanism of the mind and our sensory experiences. When shifting our attention from the external world to the internal realm of the body, Tomasko's dynamic shapes and resplendent colors arrestingly register as correlates of visual perception, where chains of electrical signals are transmitted from the surface of the retina to the cerebral cortex through the optic nerve.

These painterly explorations of Tomasko lure the onlooker to grasp those moments of awareness that instill vast gaps between semblance and abstraction, along with those moments of awareness when vision and abstraction manifest themselves as entwinements.



Liliane Tomasko, *Shapeshifter (using gray to manifest dark violet)*, 2024. Acrylic and acrylic spray on linen, 60 x 55 inches. © Liliane Tomasko. Photo: Robert Kastowsky. Courtesy the artist and Bechter Kastowsky Gallery, Vienna.

Curved bands and accumulated layers of acrylic evoke choreographic movements of unidentifiable forms within an exterior world awash in light. Yet at the same time, Tomasko taps into the interior world of the body with her diaphanous brushmarks and spray-painted curls, recalling the mechanism of the mind and our sensory experiences. When shifting our attention from the external world to the internal realm of the body, Tomasko's dynamic shapes and resplendent colors arrestingly register as correlates of visual perception, where chains of electrical signals are transmitted from the surface of the retina to the cerebral cortex through the optic nerve. These painterly explorations of Tomasko lure the onlooker to grasp those moments of awareness that instill vast gaps between semblance and abstraction, along with those moments of awareness when vision and abstraction manifest themselves as entwinements.



Liliane Tomasko, *Shapeshifter (strolling through forgotten lands)*, 2024. Acrylic and acrylic spray on aluminum, 24 x 40 inches. © Liliane Tomasko. Photo: Robert Kastowsky. Courtesy the artist and Bechter Kastowsky Gallery, Vienna.

Representing neither incoming photons, nor retinal images, nor the brain's neural tissue known as gray matter, these paintings of Tomasko nonetheless attach abstraction to the cerebrum, the somatic and the visceral. "From childhood the young Marcel was intrigued by *how* things are perceived, which is the domain of scientific optics and physics and not of aesthetics. How we see—a mental process—interested him at least as much if not more than what we see. This is one of the threads binding his works," writes Barbara Rose regarding Marcel Duchamp's artmaking process.2 This interest of Duchamp in the mental process of visual perception runs parallel to the threads binding Tomasko's process of picture-making. In 1999 Tomasko's first representational painting of an unmade bed became a revelation of the inseparability of figuration and abstraction within visual perception. Referring to that painting Tomasko recalls, "To me it also represented a need to be connected to something that we don't necessarily have direct access to. Of course, we have an innate need to understand, so light and clarity are a prerequisite. But I think we equally have a need to not understand, and I think that's what, in a sense, my paintings are very much about—a desire to be connected to something that we can't quite figure out."3 For Ludwig Wittgenstein, the limits of knowledge would become the limits of language. For Tomasko, the limits of knowledge appear and disappear through the paintwork on the picture surface and within the pictorial space.

This exhibition invites us to contemplate the relationship between our perception of the world and the mark-making process, between our phenomenological intuition and Tomasko's painterly facture, where unsystematic renditions of form, gestural erasures, accidents, and traces of spontaneous movements of the hand, arm, and body give way to interstitial spaces of chromatic revelations. This current cycle is an addendum to Tomasko's lifelong probing of perception and the thresholds of the visible world through a diverse repertoire of themes and mark-making processes. The shifts from firmly figurative representation of luminous spaces to semi-illusionistic paintings to the current nonfigurative imagery evoke the thoughts of Merleau-Ponty on the spatiality of one's own body and motility:

> The body is our general medium for having a world. Sometimes it is restricted to the actions necessary for the conservation of life, and accordingly it posits around us a biological world; at other times, elaborating upon these primary actions and moving from their literal to figurative meaning, it manifests through them a core of new significance: this is true of motor habits such as dancing. Sometimes, finally, the meaning aimed at cannot be achieved by the means of the body's natural means; it must then build itself an instrument, and it projects thereby around itself a cultural world. At all levels it performs the same function which is to endow the instantaneous actions of spontaneity with 'a little renewable action and independent existence.'4



Liliane Tomasko, *Shapeshifter (yesterday and tomorrow, divided by the present)*, 2024. Acrylic and acrylic spray on aluminum, 24 x 40 inches. © Liliane Tomasko. Photo: Robert Kastowsky. Courtesy the artist and Bechter Kastowsky Gallery, Vienna.

Within the last sentence of the foregoing citation, Merleau-Ponty borrows the phrase from Paul Valéry's fascinating 1919 essay "Note and Digression" in which Valéry describes Leonardo da Vinci's elaborate process of writing when the *uomo universale* is "at once the *energy*, the *engineer*, and the *restraints*." Valéry's sketch of Leonardo at work on his text vividly mirrors Tomasko's driven process of painting: "One part of him is impulsion; another foresees, organizes, moderates, suppresses; a third part (logic and memory) maintains the conditions, preserves connections, and assures some fixity to the *calculated design*."5



Liliane Tomasko, *Shifting Shapes*, installation view. © Liliane Tomasko. Photo: Robert Kastowsky. Courtesy the artist and Bechter Kastowsky Gallery, Vienna.

For Tomasko, to *paint* should mean to extemporize, as openly and fluidly as possible, a field of marks, scrawls, and colors "in which the released energy of the mind is used in overcoming *real* obstacles; hence the" painter "must be divided against" herself. "This is the only respect in which, strictly speaking, the whole" woman "acts as *author*. Everything else is not" *hers* "but belongs to a part of" her "that has escaped. Between the emotion or initial intention and its natural ending, which is disorder, vagueness, and forgetting—the destiny of all thinking—it is" her "task to introduce obstacles created by" herself, "so that, being interposed, they may struggle with the purely transitory nature of psychic phenomena to win a measure of renewable action, a share of independent existence."6 These words of Valéry on Leonardo, now adapted and rephrased, outline Tomasko's nonlinear method of coalescing shapes and primordial intuition through agitated marks and luscious, arabesque-like traces of color.



Liliane Tomasko, *Shapeshifter (lost in a dream)*, 2024. Acrylic and acrylic spray on aluminum, 60 x 55 inches. © Liliane Tomasko. Photo: Robert Kastowsky. Courtesy the artist and Bechter Kastowsky Gallery, Vienna.

Predominated by muted shades of pink in conversation with vibrant and subdued colors, Tomasko's medium-scale painting *Shapeshifter (lost in a dream)* displays opaque and sheer brushmarks that give rise to fragmented elliptical and spherical forms intermingled with winding bands. At times unmodulated and flat, at times wondrously illusory, serpentine stripes enact engaging counterparts of the brushstroke's everchanging modalities. On the lower left, swirling strokes in dark shades of bluish-grey convey signs of chiaroscuro, a method that is reiterated in shades of cream and brown in the upper right corner of the pictorial space. Conversely, two opaque ribbons in taupe are displayed on the middle left and the upper right. Viridian billows extend vaporously from the upper left corner toward the center, overlapping ultramarine strokes that are partly concealed underneath a charcoal black curl. Whereas flowing blues and greens here conjure up chimerical landscapes, unbridled brushstrokes in pinks and greys give way to undertones of sensuous bodies in twirling motion. Strikingly, the painting comes across as an encapsulation of the endlessly shifting evanescence of dreams. As Tomasko has explained, "I am always trying to bridge the divide between sleep time and daytime, to establish a relationship between the two, and to bring them closer somehow."7



Liliane Tomasko, *Shapeshifter (emulating stability)*, 2024. Acrylic and acrylic spray on aluminum, 76 x 76 inches. © Liliane Tomasko. Photo: Robert Kastowsky. Courtesy the artist and Bechter Kastowsky Gallery, Vienna.

While *Shapeshifter (emulating stability)* is primarily nonfigurative, it imparts intimations of the visible world. In the upper right, an outdoor chair reveals itself, partially, in shades of olive green, acting as a window into an unknowable space behind. Throughout the painting, references to the scorching sun recur in shades of intense peach, bright red, glowing orange, and neon pink. In the upper center, a semicircular shape in riveting shades of blue suggests itself as a body of water. Calling to mind Vasily Kandinsky's formative path toward abstraction through such a painting as the 1912 *Improvisation 27 (Garden of Love II)* of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Tomasko's work regenerates Kandinsky's pioneering vision. Closer to us in time, Albert Oehlen's 1989 painting *Untitled* in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York comes forth as an exemplary counterpart to Tomasko's poetic gestures that obliterate the divisions of mind and body, the visible and the invisible, the figurative and the abstract. Like innumerable practitioners of partial abstraction of our time (I am thinking of Rita Ackerman, Mark Bradford, Cecily Brown, Nigel Cooke, Julie Mehretu, and Amy Sillman to name only a few), Oehlen and Tomasko have embraced the medium of painting as a means of questioning the orthodox definitions of such semantic binaries as "linearity" versus "painterliness," "gesture" versus "mark-making," "drawing" versus "painting," "form" versus "content." In this manner, Tomasko's visual project beckons the perceiving subject to reconsider and adjourn the unilateral definitions of "figuration" and "abstraction," along with "hesitance" and "action." Context cannot but relocate the significance of abstraction.



Liliane Tomasko, *Shapeshifter (in a state of indecision)*, 2024. Acrylic and acrylic spray on aluminum, 76 x 76 inches. © Liliane Tomasko. Photo: Robert Kastowsky. Courtesy the artist and Bechter Kastowsky Gallery, Vienna.

An aggregation of vibrant outlines hovers within an irresolute space, where the landscape's unboundedness and the body's density are shaped through gossamer layers of color interlocked with shaded masses and opaque smears. In Tomasko's *Shapeshifter (in a state of indecision)*, the spatiality welled up by the layering of brushstrokes gives way to "a fragmented inscape of the psyche," as described by Rosa Abbot.9 For Merleau-Ponty the body is the primary place of knowledge, as he notes in his phenomenological approaches to reflection and interrogation: "What is given is not a massive and opaque world, or a universe of adequate thought; it is a reflection which turns back over the density of the world in order to clarify it, but which, coming second, reflects back to it only its own light."8 More abstract than Kandinsky's 1913 *Small Pleasures* of the Guggenheim Museum, the overlaying shapes of Tomasko mediate vision through the space between the painting's support and the observer's retina. Recalling Arshile Gorky's 1940 *Water of the Flowery Mill* of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the dense, opaque and translucent forms of Tomasko encapsulate primordiality through a phenomenological process that occurs within the studio of the painter.

Inside a given visual space of Tomasko, the "subjectivism" of gesturally generated forms and colors have been "consciously" or "unconsciously" negotiated with the "objectivism" of the historical presence of Kandinsky's shift toward abstraction and Gorky's tap on the elements of the psyche. The shifting shapes of Tomasko thus register as the ebb and flow between phenomenology and abstraction's own history. Transforming paint into evocations of landscape, flesh, femininity, fluidity, masculinity, viscosity, and their in-betweens, Tomasko simultaneously transforms abstraction into a chorus of "conscious" or "unconscious" allusions punctuating the aesthetic horizon. These dreamscapes of Tomasko articulate the never-ending excavation of the painterly and perceptual processes, an excavation that can now be sustained by the spectator. Traces of the "instantaneous actions of spontaneity" within the chromatically rousing paintings of Liliane Tomasko recast the historic words of Luce Irigaray: "This abstraction which is not one."

Endnotes

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Barbara Rose, "Rethinking Duchamp," The Brooklyn Rail, December 14, 2014—January 15, 2015.
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THE BROOKLYN RAIL

MARCH 2023

In Conversation: Liliane Tomasko with Phong H. Bui

By Phong Bui



Portrait of Liliane Tomasko, pencil on paper by Phong H. Bui.

Every now and then we think of the word “abstraction” as being associated with other related words, including “non-objective,” “non-figurative,” and even at times “pure painting.” Yet, every now and then we’re reminded of what John Constable once stated, “My limited and abstracted art is to be found under every hedge, and in every lane.” While it’s true that Paul Cézanne’s apples set forth the search for abstraction before cubism at the turn of the twentieth century, we should occasionally remind ourselves that figurative art has a long history, dating as far back as Ancient Egyptian art from the sixth millennium BC and the fourth century CE onwards, whereas with abstract art it is barely 108 years old—if we were to consider Kazimir Malevich’s first Black Square (1915) as the first abstract painting ever made. In all truth, to paint the invisible from what once was visible is to make abstract art. For Liliane Tomasko, the subjects of memory, dream, and reverie, which have deep roots in her slow, intimately made vignettes of domestic spaces (from pillows, bedsheets, stacks of mattresses, fabrics, all of which were painted frontally to the picture plane with close tonalities and fragments of dark interiors with subtle invitations for entry) eventually transpired to the synthesis of light and space of the mind, and of nature illuminated from within. Although there were evidences tracing from such slow movements of objects depicted in the once given and familiar domestic settings, to swift deviations of wind, air, and color of the outdoor, what Liliane has been undertaking in her new pictorial pursuit is evidenced in her recent exhibit Name Me Not at Centro de Arte Caja de Burgos (CAB) in Spain, curated by Javier Del Campo (on view through May 28). The following is an edited version of a lengthy conversation with the artist held at her studio in Tappan, New York, on Monday, March 6.

Phong H. Bui (Rail): I was taken by how you tilted your exhibit, Name Me Not, for there lies a certain spirit of resistance towards being labeled, being categorized as a digestible identification and so on, which reminds me of what Søren Kierkegaard once said "Once you label me, you negate me." Can you share with us how the theme of the exhibit developed, and how this spirit of resistance came about?

Liliane Tomasko: I was listening to Joshua Schrei, who has a podcast, he's a writer and a teacher, and he deals with current affairs through the lens of mythologies, and it's really very, very good. At any rate, he was talking to Tyson Yunkaporta (a member of the Apalech Clan of northern Queensland, in Australia, and a professor (Senior Lecturer) at Deakin University in Melbourne) about Aboriginal communities and their way of life and how indigenous thinking might help us solve the problems we are facing globally, to avert the worst of disaster, which is the destruction of the natural world and the breaking apart of civilization. And one thing that he said, which struck a chord with me and kept me thinking was that in Aboriginal language, the way they communicate between each other, it's not defined, it's quite ambiguous. So, they often don't name things, they call them this thing or that thing. But within their community, within the context of their way of communicating, and their deep connection to the land and to each other, they quite naturally know what is being referred to when they discuss things. It is to the point of what Kierkegaard had said, that if you name something alive, or a living thing, you take away part of its vitality. In other words, it's good to have labels in science or medical studies, and also technology, but it's a detriment to reduce complex, living things to any form of naming, labeling.

Rail: It can certainly eliminate any potential mystery and romance for sure. In order to counter such labeling, we have to mobilize our slow and sequential spoken language against the quick telepathic communication. Which also has to do with how we deal with doubt, for doubt requires a rational thought process, without which faith, not blind faith, would have no substance. Faith and doubt are inseparable.



Installation view: Liliane Tomasko: Name Me Not, Centro de Arte Caja de Burgos CAB, Spain, 2023. Courtesy the artist and Centro de Arte Caja de Burgos CAB. Photo: Jorge Martín Muñoz.

Tomasko: And we need to create spaces for them to coalesce for the sake of far more rewarding understanding, interpretations, and so on. So I was working on one small paper, and once I finished it, and was looking to see what I had done, I felt as though something was looking back at me. It looked at me and said "don't even try naming me." "Name Me Not" as a title came quickly as a visceral response to this particular work.

Rail: Which is included in this exhibit.

Tomasko: Yes, it's the first among eleven other works on paper installed on one wall of the last room.

Rail: I assume it was the same visceral response to the title that became the title for this exhibit. I was taken by how the title “Name Me Not” was made with 3 by 3 clear pine, and how it filled perfectly the two walls, and the wall text right in the middle.

Tomasko: Yes, I was thinking about what to do with this large hallway for the longest time, then in the end, the decision came very shortly before the show opened. I wanted the title to be made of wood as a warm material, and the whole construction to have a handmade quality to it, not be manufactured or polished. It tied in very beautifully with the big painting Spell of the Wood. It also happens to be a material that I used a lot when I was a sculptor in art school.

Rail: And before making sculptures, your first interest was photography.

Tomasko: Yes, that’s correct. This was before I started working in a contemporary art gallery in Zurich. This was in the mid-eighties. I was taking photographs of my surrounding environment as a daily practice to capture moments that were potent, most of which were interior spaces and instances of outdoor settings. They’re mostly small details of some insignificant objects, say for example, a piece of fabric lying on grass, that can all the sudden spark your imagination to think of something else, completely unrelated in physical appearances but the spirit or an aura hidden from below is mysteriously related. It is this moment of complete ambiguity that I love and thrive upon every moment of making a work. This ambiguous moment persists, and it neither describes a form of fleeting beauty nor suggests something else that is dramatic. If I can channel this energy, this sensation, it would feed the work’s life force.

Rail: What I was so struck by was the works that you made in art school as a sculptor, which relate to architectural elements of interior spaces, mostly in rectilinear, geometric configurations, and how the photographs of more diffused images of all sort of fabric, bed sheets, mattresses and whatnot, evoking dream-like spaces that are soft, lyrical, and continuous…

Tomasko: My sculptures were made of old furniture, of objects that were discarded. I would take them apart, and then put them back together in new configurations, adding new elements and materials to transform them into small environments. So, I did a one-year foundation at Camberwell College of Arts, a three-year BA in sculpture at Chelsea College of Art and Design, and another three years of sculpture at the Royal Academy Schools. It’s seven years in total. [Laughs]



Liliane Tomasko, NAME ME NOT, 2022. Acrylic and oil stick painting on canvas paper, 16 1/8 x 12 1/8 inches. Courtesy the artist and Centro de Arte Caja de Burgos CAB.



Installation view: Liliane Tomasko: Name Me Not, Centro de Arte Caja de Burgos CAB, Spain, 2023. Courtesy the artist and Centro de Arte Caja de Burgos CAB. Photo: Jorge Martín Muñoz.

Rail: Seven years of studying geometric forms as well as lyrical forms simultaneously. That is to say both figurative art and abstract art, which is an example par excellence for any student.

Tomasko: Yes, I was also at the same time interested in minimalism and its serial forms, and so on, which appeared and reappeared again quite strongly in recent works, despite the sinuous lines populating the frontal planes of the paintings.

Rail: There's an invisible grid in every painting I feel, as there is a consistent evocation of dream and reverie. How would you describe the speed of your execution, or however way it can be registered as, in your words, a visceral subjectivity without eliminating the vestiges and traces of the body, the various palimpsests of what had been there previously, and so on? In other words, while the subjects appear to be passive, the painted surface is highly active. Take, for example, any of the Bed paintings, I, II, or III (2000), for I see them as different geomorphology of landforms where that which is below Earth's surfaces and the air above affect one another as a restless system of solids, liquids, and gasses—for which change is a condition of constancy. Equally important, how does this condition of constancy carry from representation to abstraction eventually?

Tomasko: For the early paintings, I'd make drawings of a skeleton-like structure, or a map in pencil fairly accurately before I painted on top of it. In fact, the deliberate slowness is more invested in the drawing whereas the painting process is fairly fast. The group of paintings of linens I started to make around 2014 are indicative of this important change from mediating between speed and slowness, as well as from representation to abstraction.

Rail: And I'd say there had been several tonal changes in terms of color palettes, moving from neutrally muted to dark interiors, and so on.

Tomasko: Almost chromatic to dark, luminous color. Yes, and that change came about, essentially, through a shift in taking Polaroids of images that were lit with very little daylight from the sides of my studio outside of Munich. They were images of stacks of colored and often highly patterned fabric, taken again with little daylight and in extreme close up, therefore producing these incredibly atmospheric distorted Polaroids of things floating across the surface. At times the fabric's patterns are fairly identifiable. At other times, they appear almost as complete abstractions. Thinking back now, I began making those dark but luminously colored paintings when I was pregnant, and I think there is a definite connection to having life growing inside

of you, that absolutely wondrous strangeness during the early stages of motherhood. You can't keep anything that happens in your life out of your work, I think. Well, unless you're Robert Ryman, or Agnes Martin, maybe. [Laughter]

Rail: Were aspects of dreams, memory, or reverie present in your mind, even though they were painted as blurred images leading to total abstraction by 2014?

Tomasko: Dreams have always had an active presence in my life ever since I was a teenager and plagued by nightmares. So, this notion that there is this inner life that at times can seem quite autonomous has preoccupied me for a long time, because I was forced to confront something that can be truly scary. What drives me, to be honest, is the alluring mystery that lives in the darkness of dreams, which most of the time you can't comprehend what we're being kept from within. I was never very interested in dream analysis, sure it can be interesting and sometimes revealing, but I think we are our own best guidebook to unraveling our dreams. I'd rather let dreams be dreams.

Rail: This is why Gaston Bachelard noted that in contrast to a dream, a reverie can't be recounted. And in order to communicate with reverie, one must write with emotion and taste as ways to relive all the more strongly because it's written down. How can one not dream while writing? It is the pen which dreams. And the blank space gives the right to dream. This is to say it's the brush which dreams. And the blank canvas gives the right to dream.

Tomasko: It's also about claiming a new space, in which dreams and reveries can co-exist. The subject matter of my recent works from the last seven years has not been as associative, in fact it is unreachable, unsharable. Yet, I bring whatever forms and colors I can impart from my dreams into the work, and make each painting come as alive as I felt in the dreams. The crazy mix of possibilities that exists in dream sequences, the fluidity of your own identity and placement within its world, which at times can seem like a construction site. They are paintings about dreaming, and its process.

Rail: Would it be fair to say that the more frontal the images become, the more the scale of the painting increases or varies from 2014, 2015, onward? In other words, what were once considered close-up scenes of domestic interiors, now had been brought outdoors.



Installation view: Liliane Tomasko: Name Me Not, Centro de Arte Caja de Burgos CAB, Spain, 2023. Courtesy the artist and Centro de Arte Caja de Burgos CAB. Photo: Jorge Martín Muñoz.

Tomasko: Right, to the public arena, from I'd say private space to a public space. Whereas in the domestic interiors the viewer was looking at a setting, being drawn into an intimate space, now the paintings are standing up; they are frontal and reveal who they are and how they got here.

Rail: Can you recount this transitional period? Did it happen gradually over time or did it happen rather immediately?

Tomasko: I was a deliberate decision I made, actually. It came between 2013 and 2014, through a traumatic experience in our family, when Sean (Scully) hurt his back, and started taking OxyContin to alleviate the excruciating pain he was experiencing. At first we didn't really know what this drug was, and once we realized, Sean was already addicted to it. After three long and emotionally dark months, Sean decided to stop taking the medication. He started feeling better. As I consider how my family, with Sean's condition, and Oisin, who was only three years old at the time, survived this crisis together, this experience prompted me to make an incisive change in my work. Which essentially was to turn my previous paintings of beds that were always horizontal upright, making them vertical and increasing their size. I realized the more frontal and vertical they became, the further they led me into abstraction. The rest of what I needed to do was trust and follow where the work would take me.

Rail: Which means everything leading up to that point—the beginning of abstraction—was a gradual evolution.

Tomasko: Yes. I brought the line to the forefront. For the first two decades the works were formally academic and slow in their evolutions of growth, focusing on the subjects of interior spaces. Once I freed the line from under the paint, the linear quality quickly became increasingly dominant and started to develop a whole new language for me, to break things up in space. I felt it took a year or so to get more comfortable with how to work with it, through it, and around it. On the one hand, my use of color in the paintings became more adventurous, on the other, there was the line that kept growing bigger and thicker, doing all sorts of funny things. So it all together was an intensely challenging time of growth and learning. But once I felt more secure with this new visual language I was able to expand gestures and movement and so on.



Liliane Tomasko, Summoning Grays, 2022. Acrylic and acrylic spray on unstretched linen, 85 3/4 x 288 1/4 inches. Courtesy the artist and Centro de Arte Caja de Burgos CAB.

Rail: That makes sense. Would using spray paint be part of that expansion of gesture?

Tomasko: Yes, it was around 2015 that I started using spray paint, and felt it was essential to the whole mix between the sprayed gestures and the painted gestures. The way that you can travel across a large surface to break it up with sprayed lines was extremely helpful to me in those early days of moving into abstraction. It allowed me to use my whole body in a way that I didn't feel was possible when making a line with a brush loaded with paint.

Rail: Would you say 2015 was your breakthrough year?

Tomasko: It was also the same year we started working in our new studio in Tappan, New York.



Liliane Tomasko, UNGAINLY AND PROUD, 2022. Acrylic and oil stick painting on paper, 24 x 18 inches. Courtesy the artist and Centro de Arte Caja de Burgos CAB.

Rail: Were you thinking of spray paint being associated with urban graffiti?

Tomasko: I wasn't thinking of it in that particular reference. I had used spray paint some time before that, and I didn't like how it related to what I was painting at the time. But this time around, because of the scale, it just seemed to be in sync with the whole painting process. Because I was able to make these sweeping structures, and then I would start putting down large areas of colors as though I was hanging them on the gestures. The works I made during this period have their own senses of direction and intentionality without pointing too specifically to, as you said, urban graffiti, urban environment or nature for that matter. All I know is that I can't get away from either references, but I know I would rather let the works dictate their own conditions and have their own autonomy to grow the ways they need to on both terms: be as independent as possible yet at the same time communicating to each other.

Rail: Which can be very fragile and most exciting at the same time. Can you share with us your thoughts on working serially, for example, on the twelve works on paper in the first room of the exhibit? Be it FOSSIL (2022), be it UNGAINLY AND PROUD (2022), or say HYSTERICAL GRAVITY (2022), or DREAMING OF PAUL KLEE (2022), for each has its own distribution of gestures, physical and emotional presence, sense of gravity, etc.!

Tomasko: For me it's a form of meditating on a particular thing that happens in the work, and thereby keeping it within a given set structure. It serves as a disciplinary tool. I mean they are sort of held together by the timeframe that I made them in, so I always see them as a group, almost a family of work. But they don't necessarily have to be the same size, or even the same medium, as long as they were made with similar concerns, for example, there's a series that's called "Portrait of the Self," referring to what the self is doing. But there are works on paper as there are paintings on linen and on aluminum that belong to that same series, so the medium is not necessarily describing or prescribing the series anymore.

Rail: And each of those works on paper, however each was painted, and given a certain title, each is an autonomous made object, which in most if not all cases need not be translated into a painting per se.

Tomasko: Right. Exactly. They're all autonomous. But they are held together by a sort of an umbrella, or of an idea or something that I'm exploring, for example, the "Portrait of the Self" series I'd just mentioned.

Rail: What about your sense of tactility? For I noticed that in the works on paper, the sense of touch is permitted with a greater visibility, partly because oil sticks have a more concentrated body of oil pigments, I suppose. Still, how would you describe their sense of touch being different from the large oil or acrylic paintings on linen and aluminum?

Tomasko: It's, first of all, a practical matter. When you work over a small surface in one uniform size (18 by 24 inches), and you work on them on the table as I do, your bodily engagement is completely different to a larger surface, which is usually hung on the wall, and you can always step back and see what you've been doing. Whereas with the oil sticks on paper, your upper body, hand, torso and hands are so close to the surface. While I'm breathing quite heavily [Laughs] I feel at times intensely confrontational, and psychologically claustrophobic.

Rail: Yeah. I have this visceral feeling every time I look at them, as if they were and are your own open flesh.

Tomasko: Yes. At times they even look as though they're human skin being peeled off so the flesh below is exposed.

Rail: And other times they can be very lyrical and beautiful, and some other times super grotesque.

Tomasko: Yes, absolutely. The surfaces are so thick and crusty because they've been worked over so many times. They're not elegant, but they have a kind of pugnacious vitality, which I like. And I think that it comes back to the painting differently, especially this last body of work, where the sense of flux, velocity became more present.

Rail: So does the speed at which the gestures were painted. One thing I notice in all the paintings is how one or two kinds of brushes, whether measured by five inches or six inches in length, were painted very muscularly to remind the viewers the identical sizes of the brush strokes.

Tomasko: They're very unromantic [laughter], partly because they are brushes that are actually used by house painters. So, they have a pragmatic utilitarian, proletarian labor symbolism about them. What I came to realize is that those masculine or muscular brush strokes insist on providing formal structures to the works differently in different instances. They seem there to discipline the large variety of colors and tonal qualities in my work, often breaking up the surfaces into different sections where changes in psychological temperatures occur.



Liliane Tomasko, WOOD, 2022. Acrylic and acrylic spray on unstretched linen, 85 1/4 x 241 inches. Courtesy the artist and Centro de Arte Caja de Burgos CAB.

Rail: Which is precisely why they differ from say Willem de Kooning's urban abstractions from the mid-fifties like Gotham News (1955) or say the late paintings, starting with Pirate (Untitled II) (1981) until his death in 1997.

Tomasko: True. I should also add that those brushstrokes of mine do appear at times very unsettling, very uncomfortable in many instances. They often seem neither line nor shape, tend to be uprooted, and end abruptly. This, in fact, is why I like them, because I think they provide a strange directness—somehow confident and innocent all at once. I was thinking about that the other day, when we were at Arthur Cohen's opening reception on March 3 (at Scully Tomasko Foundation), you said, they're innocent paintings. And I was wondering, what is innocence? And do we ever have that, except as children? Is it something we

need? Would it make the world better? Is it important, innocence? And if it's important, how do we get to that innocence?

Rail: To get there, we have to eliminate all assumptions of ourselves, of who we are in the world, and how we look at the world with perceptions that have been pre-established. To be innocent is to preclude any form of static, fixed points of view. Which again requires the collaboration between faith and doubt, and—

Tomasko: It can be terrifying.

Rail: Indeed.

Tomasko: And it's completely fascinating. I mean, it depends what kind of painter you are too. For me, every painting is a complete individual. Every artwork of course has something to do with the next one, but it's made at a certain time with a certain frame of mind, and it can never be repeated. And if you really have faith in this process, this created truth, then you're set free in your path. Maybe that's one way to attain innocence, because there's nothing you can do to manipulate things and control things. You're not really in control in the end. And the question you ask yourself every time you start a new painting is: can you do it? Are you able to do it? Because there are times that what you make can easily turn out to be terrible, which can be devastating, but it's necessary for you to be fearless of failure, and that a sense of unknown also means excitement.

Rail: Which leads to my next question: in regards to the three big paintings in the exhibition, Summoning Grays, SPELL, and WOOD (all 2022), there is a sense of a dance choreography moving across each of the painting's frontal plane with relatively thinly painted gestures of between two or three inches thick, weaving in and out, up and down, and sideways so fluidly. Each is painted in a long rectangular format with acrylic and acrylic spray on unstretched linen, measured roughly about 85 by 241 or 288 inches. How did you make them, for the coordination between the head and the body was evident indeed, but without little traces of revision? Was there any rehearsal needed in the making of each painting?

Tomasko: There wasn't any rehearsal involved, even though I thought I would make preliminary drawings for each of them [laughs]. But I couldn't, and didn't. I just threw myself into each painting. There are three big walls in my studio, which I knew would be perfect to make these three large paintings, with such scales I'd not undertaken previously, but I knew they would hold the three large rooms in the exhibit beautifully. I knew I'd start with SPELL in black and white with plenty of spaces of transparency coming through from below of the unpainted areas of the white linen, and I should admit that it was exciting to see how well the black spray paint works on this large scale. Once I made up my mind, I made SPELL in black and white in one go.

Rail: How long did it take in one go?

Tomasko: It took three hours to make SPELL. And then I left it, and came back to it the next day to add a few more things for another hour. And that was it.

Rail: How did SPELL get its title?

Tomasko: I love the Irish painter named Nano Reid, who made this beautiful painting called Spell of the Wood (1976) a small painting of a figure sleeping on the forest floor. In fact, I saw the painting when I was preparing for my last exhibition with the same title, Spell of the Wood at Highlanes Gallery in Drogheda, Ireland. It's interesting that you saw it as dance choreography; I felt the painting had a strong relationship to scripture.

Rail: I now can see it as a form of writing. Also, was WOOD being made at the same time?

Tomasko: Yes. As soon as SPELL was made in black and white, which is associated with a reductive palette as my response to COVID-19, I felt ready to make WOOD in color. With a similar structure in mind, I painted a network of vertical lines across the canvas, as I was thinking of myself walking through a forest, then began painting colors on top of the structure, and in between of course. Again, the whole process was very organic. It was terrifying but a sheer pleasure as well.

Rail: I love the sprayed green gesture in the far left of the painting that pulls the whole painted surface back to the middle, otherwise it would just be sliding off to the right edge. Did Summoning Grays get made last?



Liliane Tomasko, SPELL, 2022. Acrylic and acrylic spray on unstretched linen, 85 3/4 x 288 1/4 inches. Courtesy the artist and Centro de Arte Caja de Burgos CAB.

Tomasko: Yes. I also wanted to paint it in black and white but not as scriptural as SPELL. And unlike SPELL and WOOD, which I painted to the edges, as they were intended to install unstretched, flat against the wall, Summoning Grays was painted with three-inch borders all around the edges in case it gets stretched or framed later on. As I was painting, I realized it became a landscape in decay, recalling the bleakness, and the disruptive violence in Picasso's Guernica (1937), which was also painted in black and white. I really made this painting especially for this exhibit, as well as the color back that has a long association with Spanish painting tradition.

Rail: From El Greco, Diego Velázquez, Jusepe de Ribera to Fransisco de Zurbarán, Francisco Goya…

Tomasko: And Picasso who certainly knew how to make great paintings with black as a color. I love using black also in my painting, partly because it evokes rejection and contradiction just as much as showing strength and muscularity. I also use black as an editing force, which often brings everything into a coherent structure somehow.

Rail: I should add that all three are mural-size paintings, which should require some serious planning, including a few sketches or preparatory drawings, but in your case, you made them without any form of premeditation. It's impressive. Still, how do you determine at what scale should each painting or a series of works be before they get painted or made?

Tomasko: Well, the body just does what it does best. It adapts. It adapts to its environment, and a painter's environment is the canvas, right? Whether it's this size or whether it's seven meters long. So you adapt. So, it's a question of your flexibility. Your ability to adjust yourself. Since scale is different from, say, the notion of proportion or of size, which are measurable, it has to be mitigated differently in different contexts. My body is adjusted differently when I make these works on paper, as we spoke earlier, on a table, which is a static space between me and the work. Whereas with those three large paintings, they're on big horizontal walls, which require a larger movement that can work with on-the-spot automatic writing so to speak. At this point, I just surrender to whatever little short time as a collaboration between my mind, my eye, and the rest of my body to do the work.

Rail: Well, early on when you were describing how you got out of that interior darkness because you saw a glimpse of light, which is super true because light can only come out of darkness. My father once told me a story that stuck with me forever about the metaphysical poet, cabaret performer, filmmaker Karl Valentin from the Weimar Republic. In one instance, Valentin was performing in this metaphysical play, where he dressed up like a beggar and the backdrop was a public park at 2 a.m. He was walking around the edges of the stage where the lights are, like a good five minutes in silence. All of a sudden, a policeman appeared and said, "What are you doing in the park at two in the morning, sir?" And he said, "I'm looking for my keys." And the policeman says, "Why don't I help you to look for them then?" So, the both of them walk around and around for another five minutes. And then he suddenly stops the beggar and says, "Are you sure you lost your keys over here?" The beggar says, "No, I lost my keys over there." And he points to the dark, in the audience. And the policeman says, "Why aren't we looking over there then?" And he says, "There's no light over there." [Laughter]

Tomasko: That's so great. Yeah. That's where the keys are. It's really dark, though. [Laughter]

Rail: Yeah. So as much as there's a sense of opening up the space, exploring that possibility in that space, claiming that space with the bodily intelligence or bodily receptiveness of the space. There's a certain degree of terror, uncertainty. And you seem to like such conditions.

Tomasko: I like to be challenged. I like to do things that are difficult for me. Maybe not difficult for others, but certainly that makes me sweat. Because exploring unknown terrain is the only thing that makes you grow, I believe, as a person. And as an artist. I was thinking about de Kooning the other day, how he was working and reworking his canvases over and over. It must have driven him crazy.

Rail: It did. He referred to such insanity as a glimpse of content.

Tomasko: I could only imagine, from taking away what had just been painted, putting more on, only to be taken away again. But I mean, in the end, they were such incredible paintings.

Rail: Like his legendary Woman I (1950–52).

Tomasko: Yes, and the rest of his women painting series.

Rail: What is your sense of revision when you don't particularly care for certain gestures you had just painted?

Tomasko: I paint over it. I mean, all of these paintings are done quite slowly. The works on paper require a long process of building up the surfaces. And then sometimes it works, but then very often, most of the time it doesn't. So, I have to go in again. And, you know, often I make it so bad that I have to rescue the whole thing by overpainting everything and starting new again. It's quite violent. Because I love light and transparency in color, I prefer the paint to be as thin as possible. I love the fact that I, as well as the viewer, can see former incarnations of the work, which become part of the work at the end. I try to keep everything as visible as I can. It's about revealing something that was. Revealing history and time. Then even on a very pragmatic basis, revealing the process of the painting itself. I think every work of art has many layers. There's technique, and there's materials, which both are essential parts of the making, obviously. But then there are all the things that come into it that are in your head and come through your body and go through your fingers, then end up on the surface. In my work, it's not always dependent on direct touch. It's not the mark making that reveals what's going on. Because the mark making is determined by these brushes and the spray, and it's quite anonymous, in a way. I think it comes through the layering and the colors. There are a lot of different colors, so much going on these canvases, it's kind of insane. But I'm always trying to get to a point where people can actually look at them without wanting to walk away too quickly. I like to get them to a point where a viewer is sort of fascinated by it. Trying to figure something out themselves, and not quite knowing what form of beauty touches them, what also made them feel repelled at the same time. It's both of those conditions that I myself feel about my work.

Rail: Can you elaborate on what a "register of a visceral subjectivity" is?

Tomasko: Well, viscerality comes really from the preoccupation with dreams and how dreams can be something unattainable, so fleeting but also so real. You feel it. You wake up, and you still have the smell of something that you experienced. It's a reality. And then the subjectivity is because I think that a dream can only be relevant in a certain way to yourself, so that's why it is so close. I mean, if you try to tell somebody a really incredible dream you had, it's impossible, partly because it makes no sense to the other person. For example, I had a dream a long time ago. And there was a huge flooding river going through the city. And I was just going down this river, and it was the most incredible feeling. Which, you know, there's nothing I can say or describe, except this desire to relive it to some extent every time I make a new painting. That's what I'm trying to bring, some sense of that other reality. And I think that other reality is a very powerful presence in everybody's life, whether you dream or not, it's there and it informs our lives.

Rail: It's our morality too.

Tomasko: Yes, and if the subconscious is a jungle, then the only way through a jungle is with good moral equipment. Art is good moral equipment.

BOOKFORUM

DECEMBER 2022

Artful Volumes: This Season's Best Books

By K.S.



The traces our bodies leave behind rarely resemble clean silhouettes. In Liliane Tomasko's early oil paintings of unmade beds, the sheets crest into ridges like arteries bulging on the back of a hand. Over the course of two decades, these detailed depictions give way to large, lurid abstractions, supposedly plucked from the dream state, that amnesiac other half of our existence. The artist's new monograph, WE SLEEP WHERE WE FALL: PAINTINGS 2000–2020 (Hatje Cantz/ARTBOOK DAP, $55), plots this aesthetic trajectory.

In the first essay, Kirsten Voigt pinches a line from Robert Walser to describe Tomasko as having "an inner eye." What the artist also has is a Polaroid, which she relies upon to filter her perceptions of her immediate surroundings. Her early paintings demonstrate a sustained attention to interiors, stripped mattresses on dusty floors, shirts crumpled casually on the back of a chair, or the deep shadows pooled along a windowsill. A section of the catalogue aptly titled "Dissolution" surveys the drawings and paintings made between 2009 and 2013. There's a claustrophobic quality to these images. The stacked blankets look out of focus, as if the artist were too close to properly photograph them. The effect imparts the kind of wooziness that makes you want to open a window. Metaphorically speaking, Tomasko did just that with Linens, 2014, an airy tangle of bedsheets rendered purely in outline. In the paintings that follow, fleshy brushstrokes loop over patches of color, the lines thickening and eventually dissipating into transparent smears, as the painter dips deeper and deeper into dreams.

THE IRISH TIMES

JULY 2022

Spell of the Wood: a midsummer-night's dream

By Aidan Dunne



That Liliane Tomasko's first solo show in Ireland in a public space - she shows regularly with the Kerlin Gallery in Dublin - is at the Highlands in Drogheda has to do with her liking for the pioneering Irish modernist painter Nano Reid. A comparison of their work suggests that Tomasko found in Reid something of a kindred spirit.

Born in Drogheda, Reid was the daughter of a publican (and later became one herself). She pursued her art education in Dublin, then Paris and London, before settling back in Dublin and, latterly, Drogheda. Involved though she was in Ireland's progressive art scene, including jointly representing the country at the Venice Biennale with Norah McGuinness, there remained something private and inward-looking about her painting, with its terse, hieroglyphic lines and muted mid-tones. She was instinctively attuned to the densely layered antiquity of the Boyne Valley, and in her art there is always a sense that modernity is deeply rooted in and entangled with place and history.

Reid's painting is entirely non-ingratiating, she has no interest in pictorial niceness, which is something Tomasko has in common with her. Though she was born in Switzerland, both Tomasko's parents were Hungarian. Not uncommonly for Eastern Europeans (then and alas now), they were displaced, in their case by the Soviet invasion that suppressed the Uprising of 1956, though they later returned. She never seems to have been inclined to settle in Hungary, and is based in New York and Germany.

Her work has from the first been open to and depends on a level of instability or unease. Earlier on she cited the disarray of a vacated bed and clothing as a starting point, evoking the absent bodies and beings, the dreams and anxieties and demands of sleepers now facing up to the day's travails. Colour with an emotional charge, often with an acidic edge and in slightly disharmonious combinations, was important. Swooping lines echoed fabric shaped by occupancy and charged the indeterminate pictorial space with giddy energy. She has since been drawn even more to the strange, irrational vividness of dreams, with their erratic progression and abrupt disjunctures, finding in them ideal models of a destabilised picture plane.

Reid's tremendous painting Spell of the Wood, in which a figure sleeps in the moody, dark topography, above ground and subterranean, of the Boyne Valley's monumental landscape, is included in the exhibition and is Tomasko's point of reference. That landscape is surely talismanic for her midsummer-night's dream, her portal to the realm of magic and the unconscious, in which the fantastic unfolds. Two huge new paintings, SPELL and WOOD, rhythmic, broad-brushed and airy, are supplemented by a number of smaller, more physically concentrated pieces, made mostly with the dense massed pigment of oil sticks. Figurative hints recur and blocks of colour coalesce into intense presences while titles dispense fragmentary narrative hints. It is a bold, involving show, enriching in its dialogue between two artists separated by time and geography but sharing a common spirit.

THE BROOKLYN RAIL

JUNE 2022

Liliane Tomasko: Evening Wind

By Raphy Sarkissian



One of the most intriguing exhibitions of recent years is Liliane Tomasko: Evening Wind at the Edward Hopper House. Scattered somewhat randomly upon the walls of Hopper's living room and dining room in Nyack, the abstract painterly marks on surfaces of paper, notwithstanding their aggregation of luscious streaks and seductive palettes of subdued and brilliant hues, register as self-contained entities. Yet the seeming abstractions of Tomasko, framed within her overall body of work and the context of Hopper's self-absorbed human figures, translate as conduits to the perceptual states of the human subject, as cryptographs of the subconscious, as passages toward the unconscious. These works compel us to reconsider the referent of the term "abstraction."

If abstraction has become ordained as modernism's paramount phenomenon, its definition may always remain a predicament. Withdrawn from the social field into the domain of pure sensory cognition, utopian abstraction's endeavor to liberate vision invokes a disembodied faculty of perception. As Fredric Jameson writes in The Prison-House of Language, "This radical inversion of the priorities of the work of art is a critical revolution analogous to Saussure's disconnection of the referential, or to Husserl's bracketing in phenomenology; its intent is to suspend the common-sense view of the work of art as mimesis (i.e. possessing content) and as source or purveyor of emotion."

Looming upon the wall facing the entrance to Hopper's bedroom, Tomasko's The Nightmare (2019) reveals swirling sweeps of grays and swaths of subdued pinks, set alongside staccatos in orange on the upper right and yellow on the lower left. These gestural traces of Tomasko's hand suspend the viewer's conviction in such lexical binarisms as intention/impulse, restraint/spontaneity, imagery/abstraction, imaginary/real. The energetic strokes that are set against delicate ones caress the boundaries of reality and dreams. On the phenomena of sleep and wakefulness, Tomasko has reflectively stated, "Into sleep we descend night after night … in the waking reality we play out our lives, acting out our respective stories in a physical universe we are apt at manipulating but nonetheless have very limited knowledge of."

Mounted alongside such works by Hopper as the etching Night Shadows (1921) and the drawing Study for "A Woman in the Sun" (1961), Tomasko's black-on-white oil pastels, executed in 2019, appear as gestural rehearsals of The Nightmare. Yet as much as they reverberate the unconscious, they reinstate the infeasibility of its thorough

excavation. Whereas the drawings of Hopper represent silhouettes, surfaces, shades, spaces of the visible world, and human figures, charging the latter psychologically within his paintings, the drawings of Tomasko come forth as residues of the mark-making process directed toward the interiority of the self and that of the perceiving subject, the gulf between the subconscious and unconscious. Hopper's etching titled Evening Wind (1921), though not on view in the exhibition but illustrated on the wall, uncannily brings together pictorial representation, abstraction, and the in-betweens. Portraying a nude woman kneeling on her bed and facing an open window, the pure void here acts as a signifier of an exterior space framed through the pictorial parts of architectural elements, the curtain on the right and the curved footboard of the bed.

By representing interiority and exteriority, while evoking night and day at once, the etching takes on a phenomenological dimension through the words of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's discussion of color as a "sense experience" when he writes, "The relations of sentient to sensible are comparable with those of the sleeper to his slumber: sleep comes when a certain voluntary attitude suddenly receives from outside the confirmation for which it was waiting."3 Crunched up and twisted forms define the pictorial space of Tomasko's The Bed (2014), echoing hints of the corporeality left behind by the sleeper's body. Though the amorphous shapes floating within the pictorial space of The Bed may operate as self-referential forms, the painting takes on a somatic quality in relation to the Polaroid series collectively named as "Beds and Mattresses" (1996–2000), where the folds and creases of the blankets and sheets range from legibility to illegibility.

Tomasko's austere oil painting Last Light Lex (2008), hung above the fireplace of Hopper's bedroom, imparts a partly abstracted detail of the window motif that recurs in numerous paintings by Hopper. In the essay from the lavish and fully illustrated catalogue, the curator of the exhibition Faye Fleming insightfully ties Tomasko's early paintings of beds and windows to a series of Hopper's paintings: Hotel Room (1931), Morning in a City (1944), Morning Sun (1952), Western Motel (1957), and A Woman in the Sun (1961). Addressing these psychologically charged images through Hopper's reaction to Ralph Waldo Emerson's transcendentalism, Fleming maps the concepts of "revelation" and "intuition" to Tomasko's corpus. 4 That body of work had from its outset employed photography, video, painting, and works on paper as mediums for representing "what comes from within, from the self," as noted by Carole Perry and Kathleen Motes Bennewitz in the preface of the catalogue.5

As disclosed through this mini-retrospective, Tomasko's formally shifting yet thematically sustained two-decade output has encompassed portrayals of the exteriority of the world and interiority of the subject through slippery instances of vision. Just as Hopper's paintings beg for narratives outside of the picture frame, the abstractions of Tomasko beg for metaphysical contents. Through looping, intertwined lines, and smudges rousing the interiority of the perceiving subject, Tomasko's most recent paintings exhibit the confines of human knowledge in untangling the sensory apparatus. In Evening Wind, temporal alterations in states of consciousness are manifested through vivid gestures, where abstraction unveils more than that which meets the eye.

ARTFORUM

JUNE 2021

Liliane Tomasko

By Jens Asthoff, Translation by Gerrit Jackson

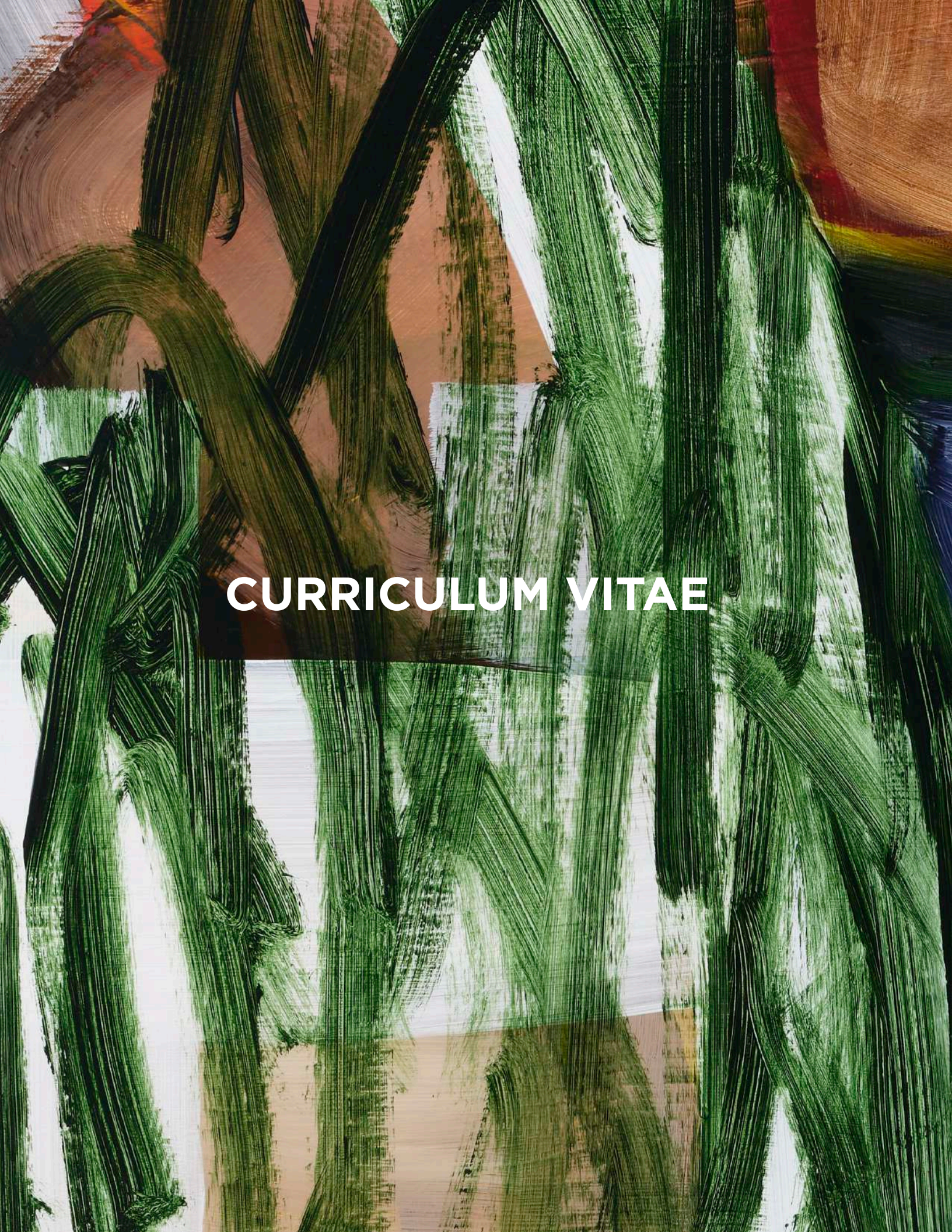


Liliane Tomasko's art is abstract and yet isn't. In her exhibition "We Sleep Where We Fall," the manner in which things attain presence in her paintings became even more forceful than in the past. Some viewers might not even have noticed the referential character of her pictures, and, compared to earlier pieces, much of Tomasko's new work looks utterly nonrepresentational. Despite their considerable atmospheric compression, her paintings from the early 2000s are clearly legible as interiors or still lifes, showing pillows, sheets, blankets, apparel, and fabric stacked up in wardrobes. The empty bed, rumpled after a night of fitful sleep, a subject as commonplace as it is intimate, is a recurrent central interest. That hasn't actually changed in the new works. In fact, Tomasko's art for more than two decades has probed themes of sleep, dreaming, and the unconscious, casting sleep as a transported state of mind in which the self, its contours blurring, appears to lose sight of itself even as it is also in touch with itself on a deeper level. Tomasko seeks to manifest and comprehend this kind of near-impalpable reality in her paintings. To this end, she has developed a variety of visual idioms that have grown increasingly abstract and unconstrained. Many of her paintings are based on Polaroids of her own bed and so contain a private nucleus. Her pictures have always kept their distance, showing vacant scenes composed of shadows and folds, close-ups in hues out of Bonnard or Morandi, the framing variously inviting more and less abstract interpretations, the sleepers themselves conspicuously absent throughout. The exhibition's title left no doubt that sleep and the trace remain the major axes structuring the artist's gaze, while the works on view revealed that the artist has entered a new phase not only in her engagement with her theme, but also in representational painting—and has forged a novel conjunction of the two.

Most of the works, including the imposing one, dated 2019–20, from which the exhibition took its title, and three large paintings from the series "Hold on to Yourself," 2020–, drastically attenuated those qualities that make things seem tangible while insistently tying the materiality of their subject matter to the chromatic texture of painting itself. Abstract landscapes composed of sheets and pillows—in the perspective of Tomasko's art, the physical media, as it were, of sleep—now resolved into a complex wattlework of curving brushstrokes weaving together zones of clear contours and rhythmically staggered ribbons of paint with color areas of indeterminate depth or glimpses of inscrutable black. Several of the new pictures revel in a luminous palette—some more subtly, with spray-painted

accents, as in Hold on to Yourself: 5/31/2020, others with expansive and vigorous contrasts, as in Strident Green, 2020, and a secret that wasn't, 2019. Quieter paintings such as Hymn (January) and Dirty Linen., both 2019, which deliquesce into swirls and streaks of pale gray, are perhaps where Tomasko has achieved an especially compelling union between the look and feel of textile surfaces that are her subject, the genuine materiality of painting, and the theme of sleep as a kind of melting away of consciousness.

The technically intriguing Hymn (January) tests the threshold of disintegration: Warm yet somehow also cold pinks shimmer through the tightly arrayed horizontal bands of interwoven grays and blacks. The compositional disequilibrium of murky tones unevenly alternating with more pallid zones recalls clouds, while the gestural brushwork owes its density to a pulsing sinuousness. Tomasko's painterly finesse is evident in the sparse shading lines in black spray paint enhancing this texture: Inconspicuous in themselves, they profoundly alter the beholder's overall impression, providing an intensified plasticity. In Hymn (January), which may or may not depict layered fabrics, this effect stakes out a peculiar paradox: The painting renders a disembodied physicality that is ghostly and intangible, like a dream vision.



CURRICULUM VITAE

LILIANE TOMASKO

Born in 1967, Zurich, CH
Lives and works between New York, NY, US, and London, UK

EDUCATION

1998 MA in Fine Arts, Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK
1995 BA in Fine Arts, Chelsea College of Art & Design, London, UK
1992 Foundation Course, Camberwell College, London, UK

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2025 *The Conundrum of the Organically Angular*, Maison La Roche, Paris, FR
POEM THINGS, Nino Mier Gallery, New York, NY, US
Liliane Tomasko: Psyche of the Portrait, Museums Sheffield, Sheffield, UK

2024 *Twofold*, Kerlin Gallery, Dublin, IE
Shifting Shapes, Bechter Kastowsky, Vienna, AT

2023 *Liliane Tomasko, The Artists Eye*, Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin, IE
Portrait of the Self, Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, US
NAME ME NOT, CAB Burgos, Burgos, ES

2022 *Evening Wind*, Edward Hopper House Museum, Nyack, NY, US
S P E L L O F T H E W O O D, Highlanes Gallery, Drogheda, IE

2021 *Morpheus*, Kunstmuseum Kloster unser lieben Frauen Magdeburg, DE
Blind Spot, Bechter Kastowsky Galerie, Schaan, LI
We Sleep Where We Fall, Kewenig Galerie, Berlin, DE

2019 *dark goes lightly*, Château la Coste, FR
Amygdala, Kewenig, Palma De Mallorca, ES
Liliane Tomasko, Marc Straus Gallery, New York, NY, US
The Red Thread, Kerlin Gallery, Dublin, IE

2018 *Caja de sueños*, MATE Lab, Museo MATE, Lima, PE
Second Nature, Bechter Kastowsky Galerie, Vienna, AT
a dream of, Blain|Southern, Berlin, DE
12 nights x dreams, ROCA Rockland Center of the Arts, Nyack, NY, US
and per se and xxi: Sean Scully and Liliane Tomasko, Ingleby Gallery, Edinburgh, UK

2017 *Liliane Tomasko*, Marc Straus Gallery, New York, NY, US
Kunstwerk, two-person exhibition with Sean Scully, Sammlung Klein, Eberdingen, DE

Feeling Folding, PIFO Gallery, Beijing, CN
The White Heat, Marc Straus, New York, NY, US

2016 *Sean Scully + Liliane Tomasko*, two-person exhibition curated by Javier Molins, Fundación Bancaja, Valencia, ES
Texere, Bechter Katowsky Galerie, Vienna, AT

2015 *Sense*, Kerlin Gallery, Dublin, IE
Mother-Matrix-Matter, Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, Miami, FL, US
In Visible World, Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix, AZ, US
dusk at dawn, Kunsthalle Rostock, DE

2014 *Into the Darkness*, Leslie Feely, New York, NY, US

2013 *The Shifting*, Garrison Arts Center, New York, NY, US
Vestige, Timothy Taylor Gallery, London, UK

2012 *Deeper Dark*, Kerlin Gallery, Dublin, IE

2011 *Luminous Matter*, IVAM, Valencia, ES; Casal Solleric, Palma, Mallorca, ES; Herforder Kunstverein, Herford, DE

2010 *Rückblick*, Zweigstelle Berlin, Berlin, DE
Recent Paintings, New York Studio School, New York, NY, US

2008 *Corner*, Galerie Jamileh Weber, Zurich, CH
Liliane Tomasko et Wanda Skonieczny: De l'intime et du pli, Hôtel des Arts, Centre Méditerranéen D'Art, Toulon, FR

2007 *Liliane Tomasko*, Galeria Carles Taché, Barcelona, ES

2006 *Return Bilder und Arbeiten auf Papier*, Galerie Jamileh Weber, Zurich, CH

2004 *Liliane Tomasko*, Sala Pelaires, Palma de Mallorca, ES
Liliane Tomasko, Walter Storms Galerie, Munich, DE

2002 *Liliane Tomasko*, Galeria Llucià Homs, Barcelona, ES

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2024 *A Journey into The Unknown*, Haricot Gallery, London, UK
Risky Business, Torrance Art Museum, Torrance, CA
Something Woman This Way Comes, Patricia Low Contemporary, Gstaad, CH

2023 *Thus Spoke the Rabbit*, Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, US
Root Systems, Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, US

Austria-Germany, Painting 1970-2020, The Albertina MODERN, Vienna, AT
Post-Vandalism, curated by Stephen Burke, Atelier Now, Dublin, IE
Making a Mark: Abstraction in the Ahmanson Collection, Ahmanson Gallery, Irvine, CA, USA
DO/DON'T PAINT, curated by Lorenzo Madaro, Plain Gallery, Milan, IT
the yellow light at 6 pm: Remembering, envisioning, sensing landscape, curated by Christian Malycha, Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin, DE

2022 *Singing in Unison*, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York, New York, USA
Seizing the Insignificance of the Everyday, day01.gallery, Sydney, AU
Andy Warhol to Cecily Brown: from the collections of The Albertina, The Albertina, Vienna, AT
Painters Paint Paintings: LA VERSION, curated by Alexander Warhus, Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, US
PARACUSIA: of Sounds & Visions, Kewenig Gallery, Berlin, DE

2021 *From the Real: Liliane Tomasko & Sean Scully*, Newlands House Gallery, Petworth House and Park, Petworth, UK
Inventing Nature. Plants in the arts, Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe, DE

2020 *Double-M, Double-X*, Kerlin Gallery, Dublin, IE
RHA 190th Annual, Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin, IE
Logical Freedom: Abstract Art Exhibition, Epoch Art Museum, Wenzhou, CH
The Unseen Masterpiece, online exhibition, Ingleby Gallery, Edinburgh, UK

2019 *L'Abandon du sujet: collection du Conseil Départemental du Var*, Villa Théo Centre d'Art, Saint-Clair, FR
Warhol to Richter. From the Collections of the Albertina Museum, Vienna, AT

2018 *Art and Friendship*, Green Door Gallery, Brooklyn, NY, US
Catch It and Lose It, Locks Gallery, Philadelphia, PA, US
Doodle & Disegno, Blain|Southern, Berlin, DE
Abstract / ion, Galerie Klüser 1 & 2, Munich, DE
Contemporary Chaos, Vestfossen Kunstlaboratorium, Vestfossen, NO

2017 Domestic Space / Christmas Edition, Neue Galerie Landshut, Landshut, DE
Bild /Skulptur, Bechter Kastowsky Galerie, Vienna, AT
Abstract Painting Now!, Kunsthalle Krems, AT sommer 17, Bechter Kastowsky Galerie, Vienna, AT
White Heat, Marc Straus, New York, NY, US
Park, Holly's Gallery, Guangzhou, CN (co-presented by Kerlin Gallery)

2016 *If Only Bella Abzug Were Here*, Marc Straus, New York, NY, US
sommer, Bechter Kastowsky Galerie, Vienna, AT

2015 *Sleepless: The Bed in History and Contemporary Art*, 21er Haus, Vienna, AT
Domestic Space, Zweigstelle Berlin, Berlin, DE

2014 *Couleurs Contemporaines*, Centre D'Art de Chateauvert, FR

2013 *VIKTOR*, Zweigstelle Berlin, Berlin, DE

2011 *From each the best*, Zweigstelle Berlin, Berlin, DE
Liliane Tomasko and Sean Scully. The shadow of the corner of the wall, Haus am Lützowplatz, Berlin, DE

2010 *Summer 2010*, Kerlin Gallery, Dublin, IE
Venus & Mars, Portraits, Weltraum, Munich, DE
Decameron, curated by David Cohen, New York Studio School, New York, NY, US

2009 *1999/2009, Regard sur la Collection*, Hôtel des Arts, Centre Méditerranéen D'Art, Toulon, FR
Preview, Galerie Jamileh Weber, Zurich, CH
Gallery Artists, Walter Storms Galerie, Munich, DE
Die Stille zwischen zwei Aktionen, curated by Frank Hutter, Gassereins, Munich, DE
Venus & Mars, Künstler Paare München, Weltraum, Munich, DE

2008 *Go between*, Oberösterreichischer Kunstverein, Linz, AT
Centre Cultural La Mercè, Girona, ES

2007 *Go between*, Maneggio Chiablese, Torino, Italy; Kunstverein Traunstein, DE
30 Jahre, Walter Storms Galerie, Munich, DE
Neue Bilder von verschiedenen Künstlern, Galerie Jamileh Weber, Zurich, CH

2006 *Go between, 9 Positionen zwischen abstrakter und figurativer Malerei*, Kunstverein Aichach, Aichach, DE
20 Jahre K20, Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, DE

2005 *Sala Pelaires*, Palma de Mallorca, ES

1998 *Original #2*, Kapil Jariwala Gallery, London, UK
Artists of the Day, Flowers East, London, UK

1997 *Landseer Prize*, Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK

1995 *First Class*, The London Institute, London, UK

1993 *Soundings*, Moravian Burial Ground, London, UK

COLLECTIONS

The Albertina, Vienna, AT

Staatliche Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe, DE
Kunstmuseum Bern, Bern, CH
The Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin, IE
IVAM-Institut Valencia d'Art Modern, Valencia, ES
Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, Munich, DE
Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich, DE
K20 K21 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, DE
Lowe Art Museum, Miami, US
Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Fort Worth, US
Sammlung Klein, Eberdingen, DE
VMFA Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, US
Try-Me, Richmond, US
Charles Library Art Collection, Temple University, Philadelphia, US
Bank Vontobel AG, Zurich, CH
Hilti Art Foundation, Schaan, Liechtenstein
Hôtel des Arts, Centre Méditerranéen D'Art, Toulon, FR
Sammlung Klein, Eberdingen-Nussdorf, DE

BIBLIOGRAPHY

2021 *Liliane Tomasko: We Sleep Where We Fall. Paintings 2000-2020*, published by Hatje Cantz, essays by Kelly Grovier, Raphy Sarkissian and Kirsten Voigt
Liliane Tomasko: Evening Wind, essay by Faye Fleming, published by Edward Hopper House Museum and Study Center, Nyack, 2022

2019 *Liliane Tomasko: dark goes lightly*, published by Chateau La Coste & Oscar Humphries

2018 *Contemporary Chaos: Curated by Demetrio Paparoni*, published by Vestfossen Kunstlaboratorium Foundation

2017 *Feeling Folding*, essay by Jiang Yuehong, published by PIFO Gallery, Beijing Park, ed. Wang Yefu & Darragh Hogan, published by Holly's Gallery, Guangzhou/ Kerlin Gallery, Dublin

2016 *SCULLY + TOMASKO*, edited & text by Javier Molins, published by Fundacio Bancaja
Sean Scully + Liliane Tomasko, Fundación Bancaja, Valencia
Liliane Tomasko, Texere, Bechter Kastowsky Galerie, Vienna, AT; texts by Jurriaan Benschop and Florian Steininger

2015 *Liliane Tomasko, Sense*, Kerlin Gallery, Dublin, IE; text by Sue Hubbard
Mother-Matrix-Matter, Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami; texts by Jill Deupi, Heather Diack
In Visible World, published by Phoenix Art Museum; essay by Virginia Shore

2013 *Liliane Tomasko, Vestige*, Timothy Taylor Gallery, London, UK; texts by Oscar

Humphries and Kelly Grovier

2011 *Liliane Tomasko Luminous Matter*, Czernin Verlag, Vienna; texts by Consuelo Císcar Casabán, Sally Radic, Armin Zweite

2010 *Liliane Tomasko*, New York Studio School, New York; text by David Cohen

2008 *Liliane Tomasko: De l'intime et du pli*, Hôtel des Arts, Centre Méditerranéen D'Art, Toulon; texts by David Cohen, Gilles Altieri

2007 *Liliane Tomasko*, Barcelona: Galeria Carles Taché; text by Enrique Juncosa

2006 *Jahresberict 2005/2006*, Düsseldorf: Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen; text by Anette Kruszynski
'Go Between': 9 Positionen Zwischen Abstrakter und Figurativer Malerei, Kunstverein Aichach, text by Marcus Golling

2004 *The Third Shore*, Munich and Palma de Mallorca: Walter Storms Galerie and Sala Pelaires; texts by Sean Scully and David Carrier

2002 *Liliane Tomasko*, Barcelona: Galeria Llucià Homs, text by Edward Lucie- Smith
Art Tomorrow, Paris: Editions Pierre Terrail



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