

Jessica Dickinson in her Sunset Park, Brooklyn studio. Photograph by Chris Luttrell.



## JESSICA DICKINSON AT JAMES FUENTES

To get to Jessica Dickinson's studio is a bit of journey. It is located in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, within the massively sprawling Brooklyn Army Terminal, which nonprofit ArtBuilt, working with the city, developed to provide affordable mixed-use studio spaces. Along with private investors, civic support, and multiple artists, Dickinson helped to organize the pioneering development, the largest of its kind in New York's recent history.

Dickinson's own studio is ideal in striking the perfect balance of a comfy second home and rigorous workspace. Freshly finished paintings along with works in progress line the walls, including two new pieces that Lower East Side fixture James Fuentes will present at the Dallas Art Fair this fall. Both are large wooden panels with roughed-up and carved-into surfaces. Dickinson hammers into the wood with a mallet and a huge paint scraper, marking the site with jagged punctures which she then fills and covers with paint or plaster.

Sections are sanded and the process is intuitively repeated over many days and months. The end results are richly layered surfaces with aggressive patience embedded in the material; these are slow paintings, not just in their making, but also in their revealing. "There's something very specific I'm after in terms of poetics, and a lot of that has to do with how something changes through time." Dickinson explains. "These different moments build on top of each other and create an understanding, which becomes a painting."

Beginning in 2010 with *Towards*, which will also be presented in the James Fuentes booth, Dickinson began to chart the topographical shifts of her work with rubbings of them on paper, capturing the dynamic tactility of each panel's iteration. Titled *Remainders*, this series is made analogous to the paintings and helps her make sense of all the moments that are lost and added during the process. "I want there to be a stillness for the work, allowing for things to emerge. It's about acknowledging a life span; with the *Remainders* you see the life span of the painting," Dickinson says. A room full of her *Remainders* were exhibited at Cindy and Howard Rachofsky's The Warehouse in 2014.

For panels so substantially physical, Dickinson's work is birthed from ephemeral inspirations, such as the shape of raking sunlight across a wall. While I was in her studio, a similar moment lit the surface of a work, accenting the excavated terrain of the painting. Dickinson spoke of writing personal prose after noticing dust collecting on a shelf and gestured towards pieces of paper taped to a concrete column. Each sheet contained stanzas made of starkly paired words, a process Dickinson uses to title and come to terms with the essence of the work. Her daily drawing practice uses similar instances as a starting point, helping to build a map for each work's elusive journey. "I like to work through the unknown—that's what making art is about. In the end, the paintings become something I could have never imagined." —Arthur Peña



Top: Jessica Dickinson, *Always-Also*, 2010–2011, oil on limestone polymer on panel, 54.25 x 48 in. Courtesy of the artist and James Fuentes. Bottom: Jessica Dickinson, *Towards-*, 2009–2010, oil on limestone polymer on panel, 50 x 48 in. Courtesy of the artist and James Fuentes.