

BEVERLY ACCHA NOTHING STATIC



Beverly Acha

Nothing Static

with essays by

Danny Greenberg
Valentina Jager
Amanda Lechner





CONTENTS

Published on the occasion of:

Beverly Acha: *In the Loop*
Emerson Dorsch
April 30 - July 9, 2023
5900 NW 2nd Ave
Miami, FL 33127

and

Beverly Acha: *Nothing Static*
Deanna Evans Projects
September 15 - October 21, 2023
373 Broadway E15
New York, NY 10013

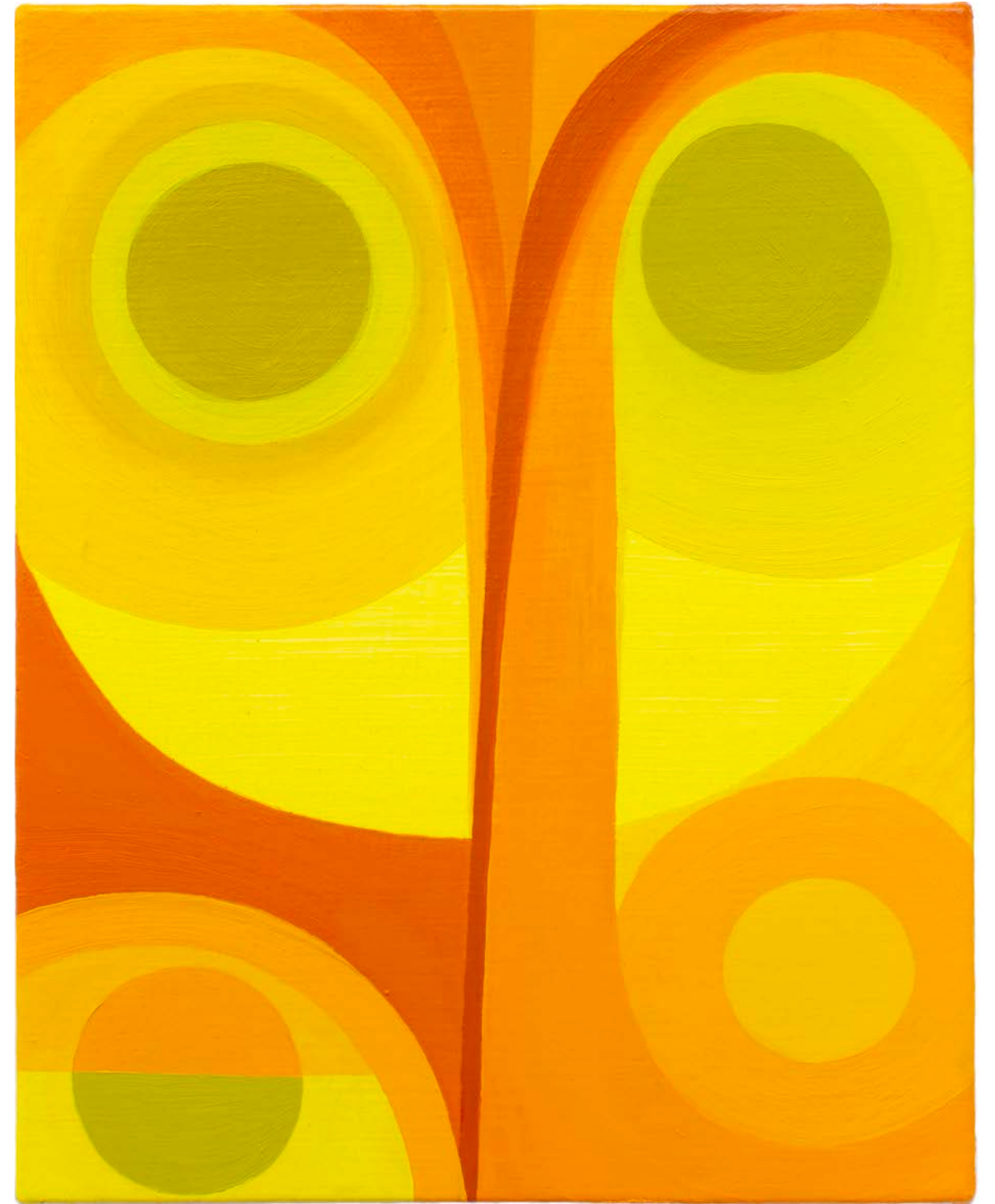
First Printing, November 2025
Edition of 150
ISBN: 979-8-218-72126-8

FRONT COVER
falling flowers (o quatro cometas, o que?) [flores que caen (or four comets, or what?)] [detail]
2023, oil on canvas, 43.25 x 35.38 inches

9	Exhibited Works
59	Other Works, 2021-2023
81	<i>All Futures Contain Their Past (On Beverly Acha’s Recent Paintings)</i> –Valentina Jager
91	<i>gaze of days / mirada de dias — 10 notes</i> –Amanda Lechner
101	<i>Touching Light / Absorbing Color: Color as Fact in Beverly Acha’s Paintings</i> –Danny Greenberg
116	List of Works
118	Press Release I: <i>In the Loop</i> at Emerson Dorsch
120	Press Release II: <i>Nothing Static</i> at Deanna Evans Projects
123	Artist Biography



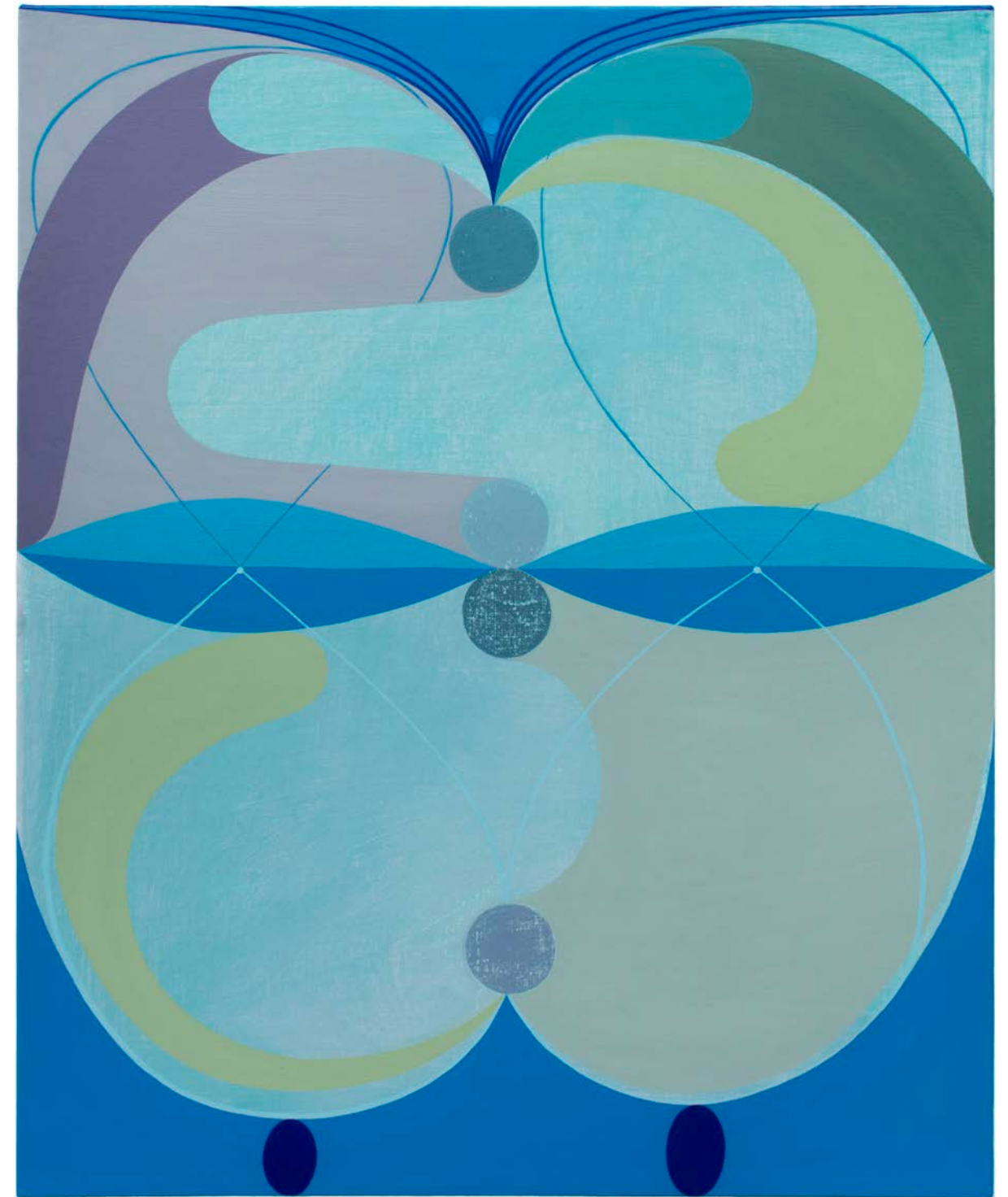
EXHIBITED WORKS



notas (do re(y) (a drop of golden sun) miii faaaa soo laa tiiii d(oH))
2022-2023, oil on canvas, 10 x 8 inches



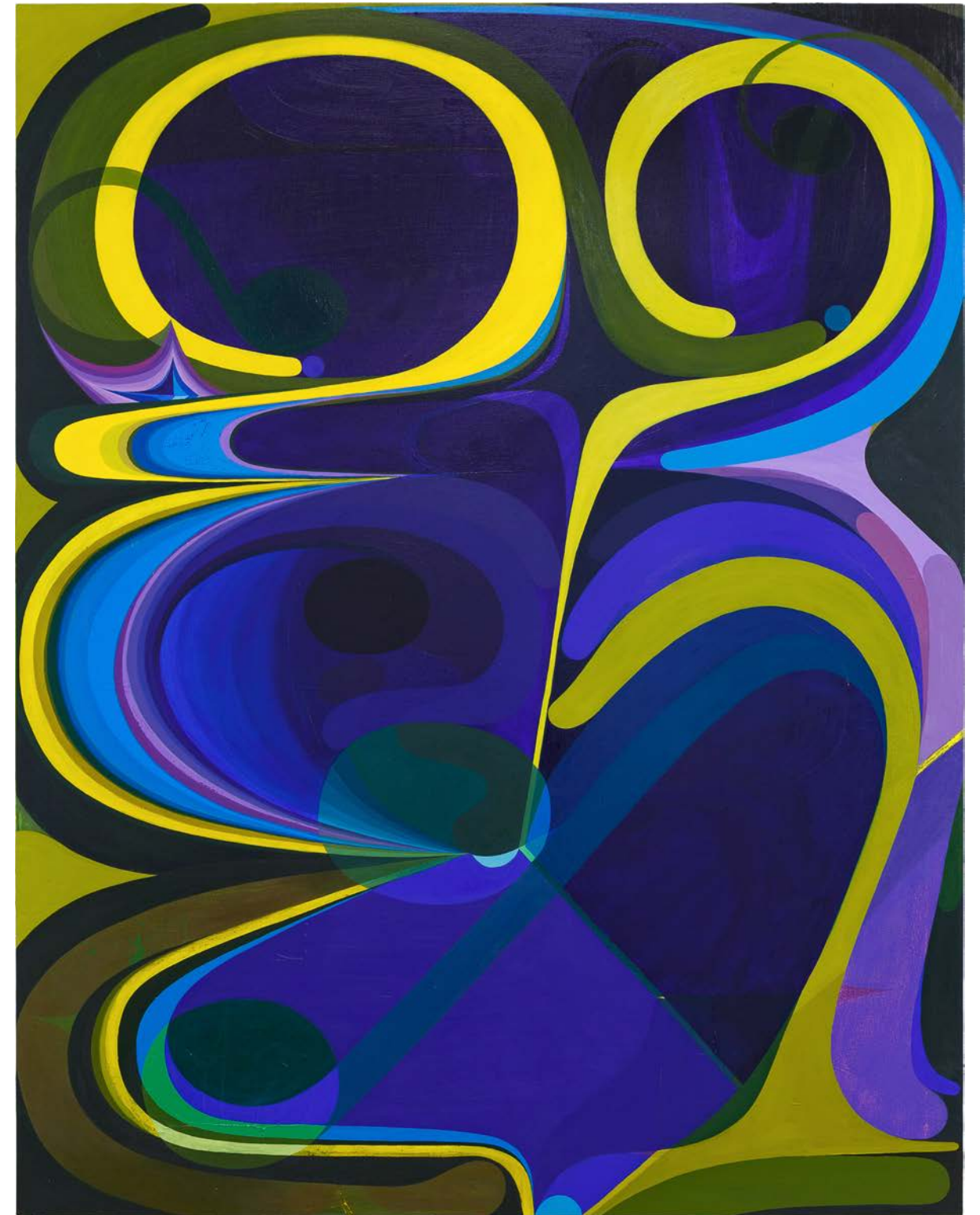
espacio contenido (night landscape, across time) [contained space (paisaje de noche, a través del tiempo)]
2020-2023, oil on canvas, 30 x 24 inches



double infinity (towards something becoming)
2023, oil on canvas, 22 x 18 inches



Installation View of "Nothing Static" at Deanna Evans Projects



landscape is a kind of feeling / todo and nada / everything y nothing (an exquisite corpse)
2021-2023, oil on canvas, 22 x 18 inches



misterios del universo (stillness at the center) [mysteries of the universe (quietude en el centro)]
2022-2023, oil on canvas, 10 x 8 inches

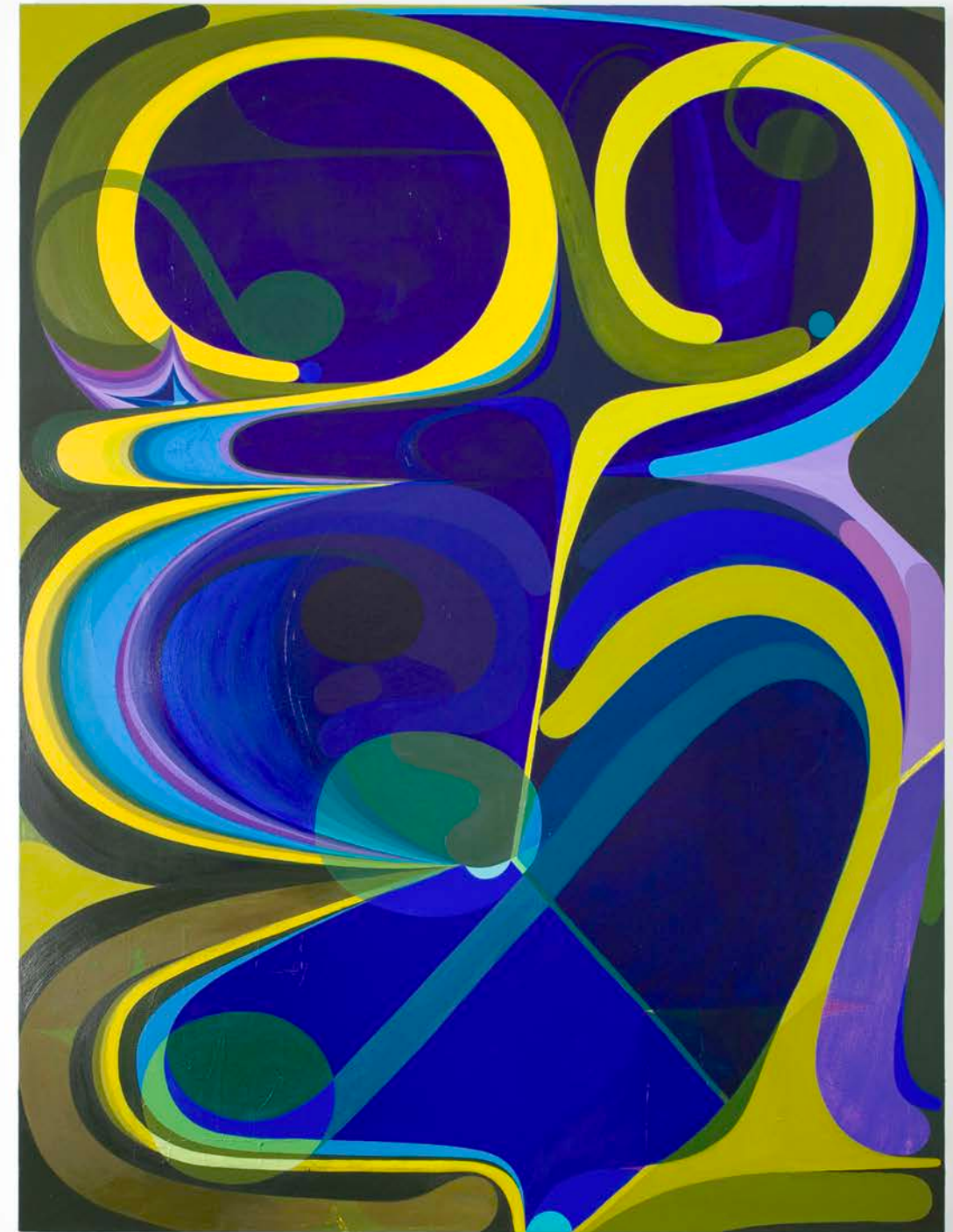


double spiral (blooms) [espiral doble (florecer)]
2020-2023, oil on canvas, 60 x 48 inches



bouquet (borrowed flowers) [ramo (flores prestadas)]
2023, oil on canvas, 22 x 18 inches

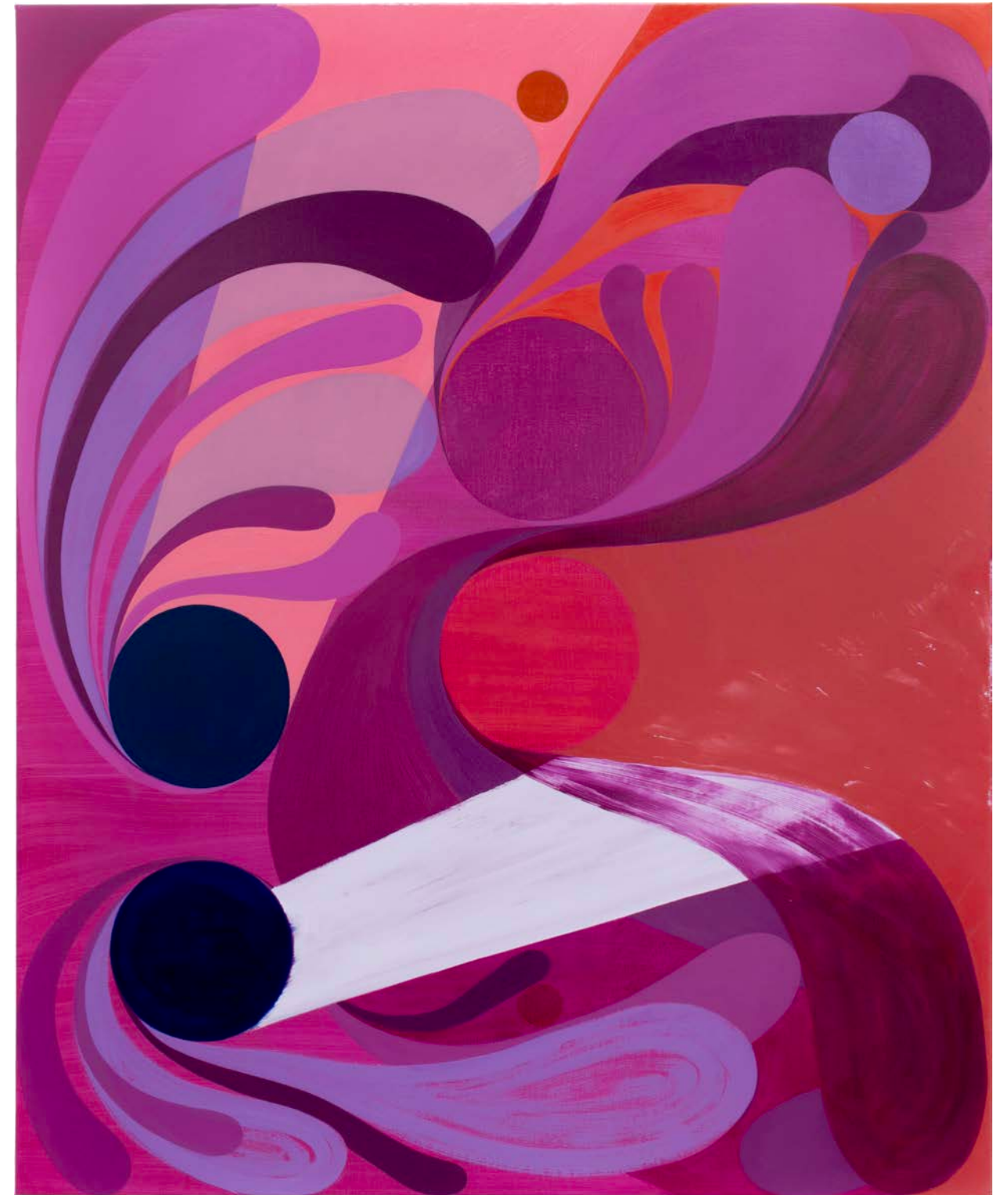




*Installation View of "Nothing Static" at
Deanna Evans Projects*



time keeping device or folding time (reloj de arena)
2022-2023, oil on canvas, 22 x 18 inches



falling flowers (o quatro cometas, o que?) [flores que caen (or four comets, or what?)]
2023, oil on canvas, 43.25 x 35.38 inches





round and round (o la memoria, lighthouses and the tides) [vueltas (or memory, faritos y mareas)]
2021-2023, oil on canvas, 72 x 60 inches



Installation View of "In the Loop" at Emerson Dorsch



melodías en el silencio (sonidos del paisaje) [melodies in the silence (sounds of the landscape)]
2023, oil on canvas, 18 x 12 inches



poquito a poquito hacia el infinito [little by little until infinity]
2023, oil on canvas, 18 x 12 inches



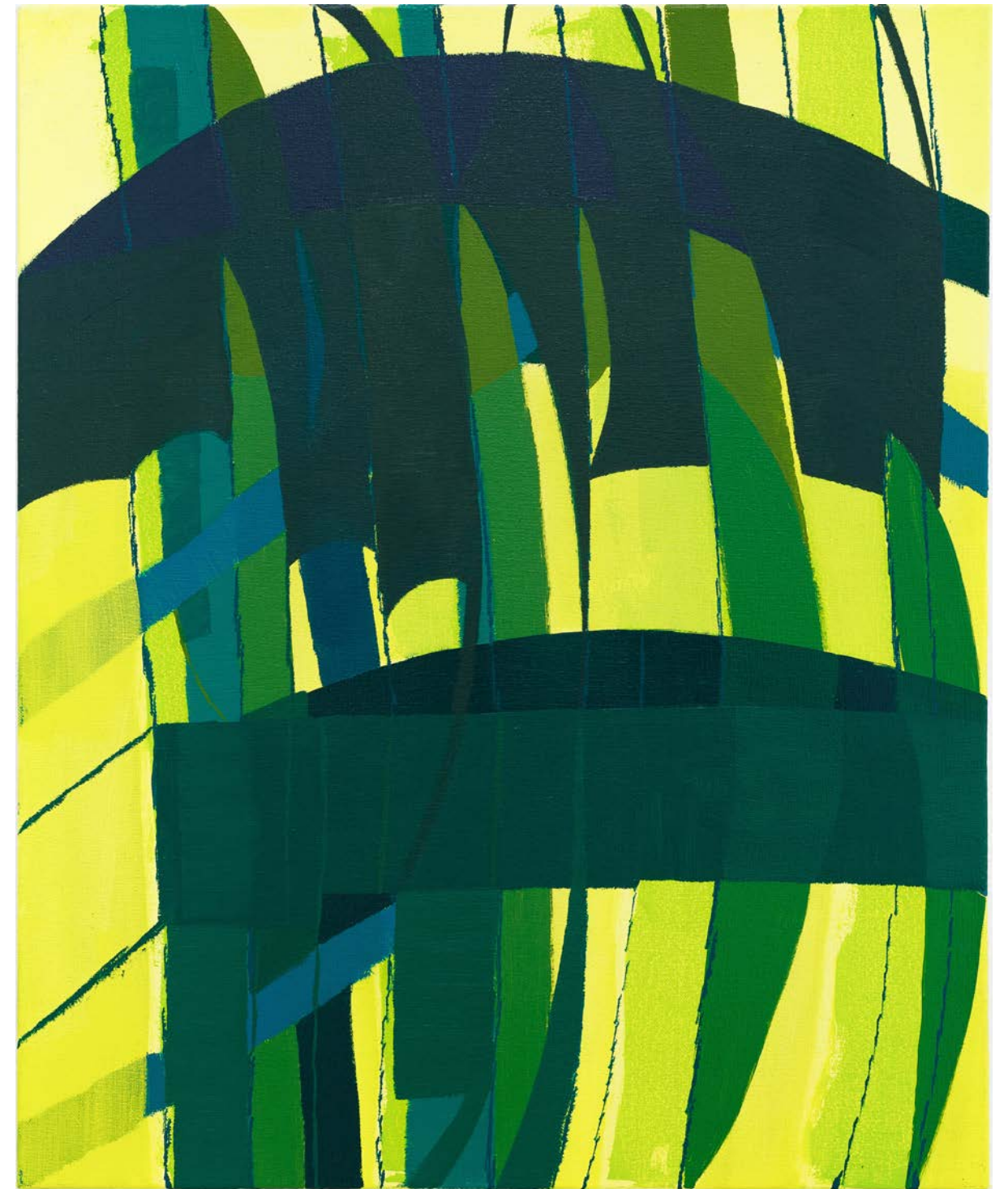
gira (des-paH-si-toH, des-pa-ci-to) [spin (sl-OH-Lee, slow-ly)]
2021-2023, oil on canvas, 72 x 60 inches



Installation View of "In the Loop" at Emerson Dorsch



misterios del universo (loop de loop) [mysteries of the universe (loop de loop)]
2022-2023, oil and acrylic on canvas, 10 x 8 inches



las Arecas (o esa luz deslumbrante) [the Arecas (or that blinding light)]
2020-2023, oil on canvas, 22 x 18 inches



Installation View of "In the Loop" at Emerson Dorsch



misterios del universo (las violetas de mami I) [mysteries of the universe (mom's violets I)]
2021-2023, oil on canvas, 22 x 18 inches



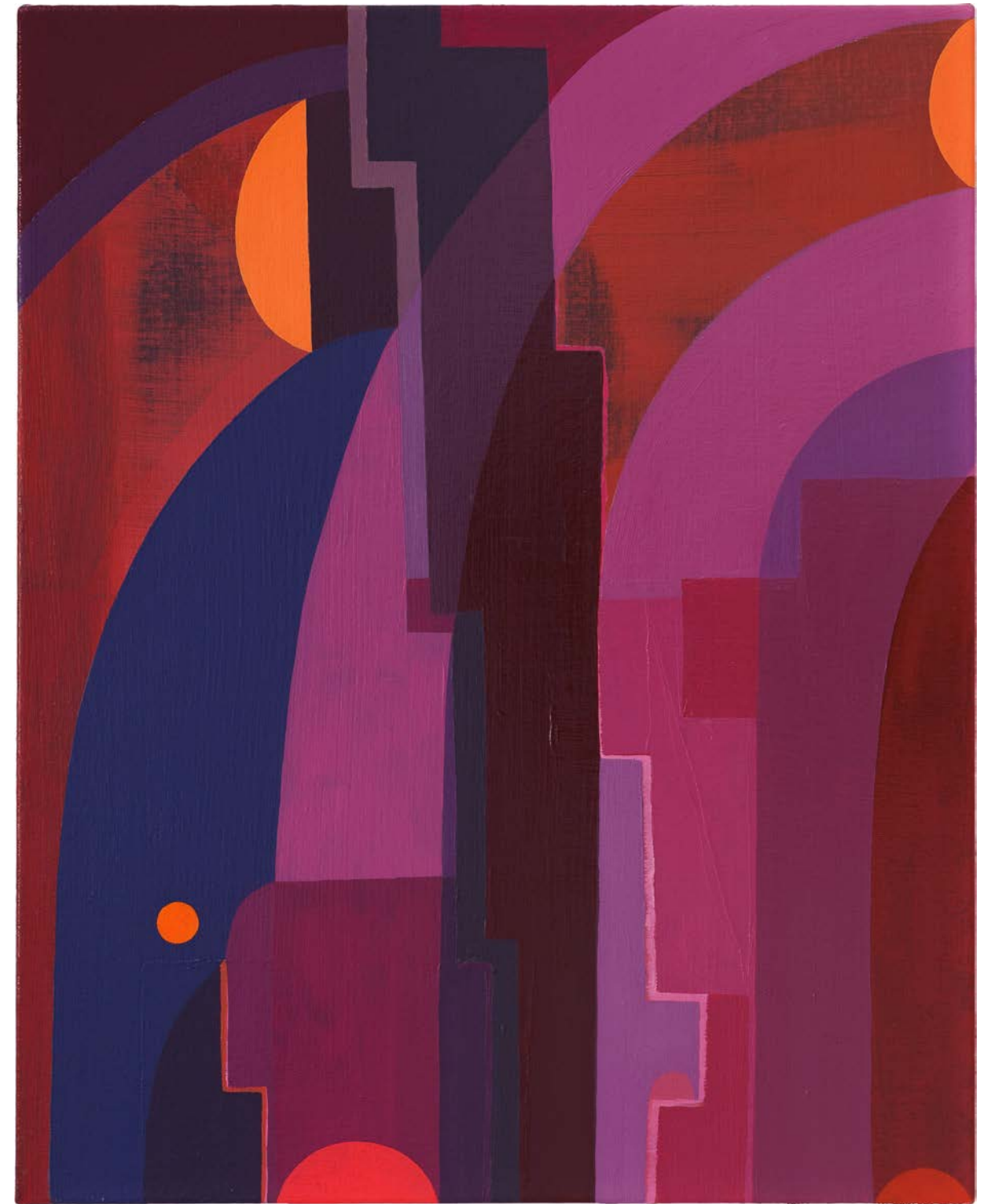
Installation View of "In the Loop" at Emerson Dorsch



misterios del universo (el tiempo — ti-em-po — tii-ehm-poH) [mysteries of the universe (time — ti-me — tY-m)]
2022-2023, oil and acrylic on canvas, 10 x 8 inches



misterios del universo (oh holy holy ah purity purity ehh sweetly sweetly) [mysteries of the universe (oh holy holy ah purity purity ehh sweetly sweetly)], 2022-2023, oil and acrylic on canvas, 10 x 8 inches



time lapse (contemplando la luna y el reflejo del sol) [time lapse (contemplating the moon and the reflection of the sun)]
2020-2023, oil on canvas, 20 x 16 inches



OTHER WORKS

2021-2023



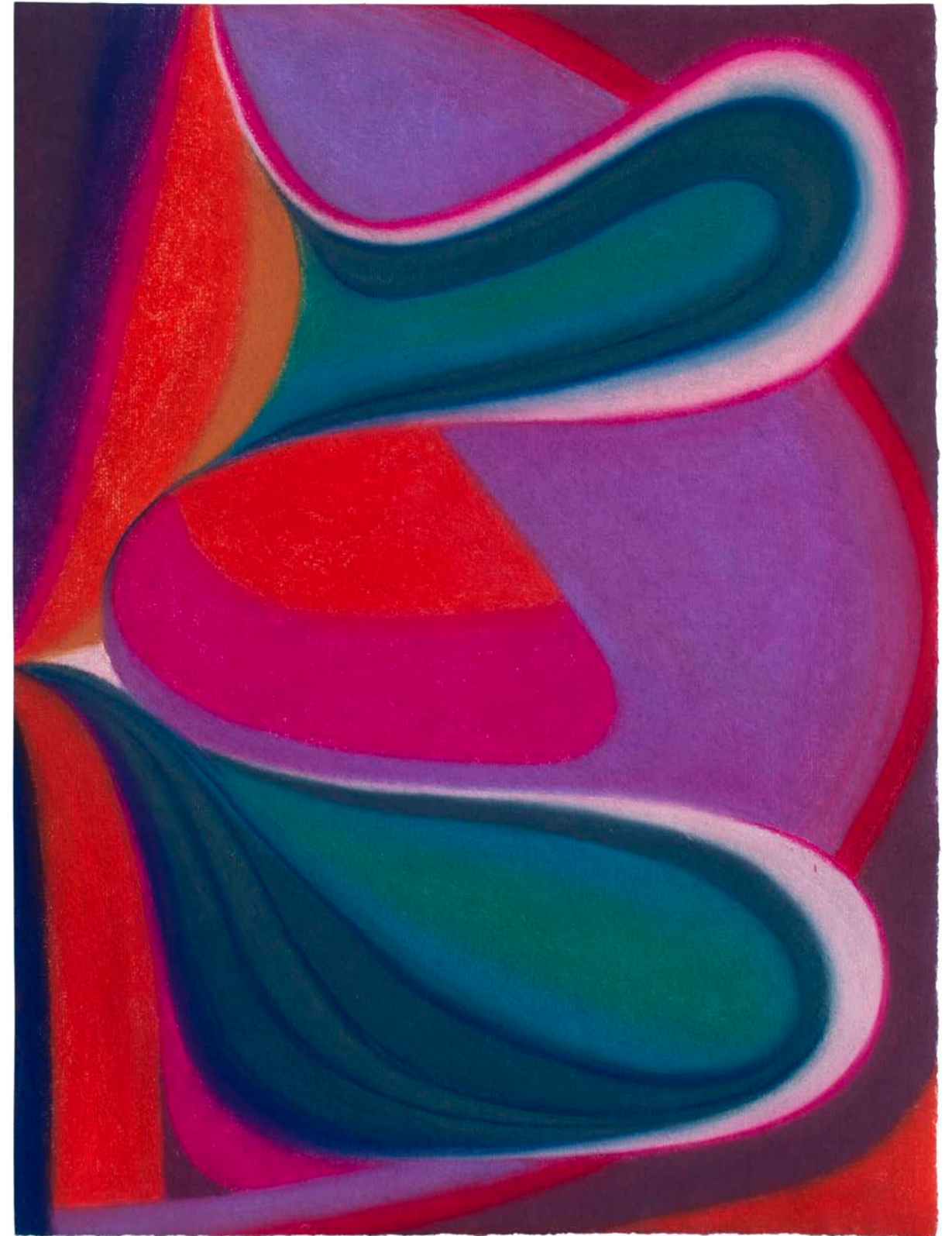
misterios del universo (las violetas de mami II) [mysteries of the universe (mom's violets II)]
2023, oil on linen, 67 x 59 inches



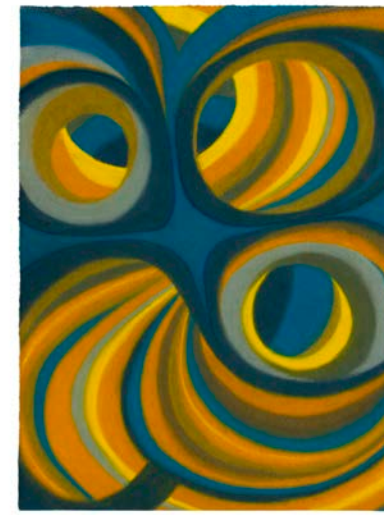
landscape and suns [paysaje y sols]
2021-2023, oil on canvas, 22 x 18 inches



nuevas energías [new energies]
2021-2022, oil on canvas, 22 x 26 inches



código (nuevas energías I) [circuit (new energies I)]
2022, pastel, 15.7 x 11.8 inches



TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT

estalactitas (nuevas energías XII) [stalactites (new energies XII)], 2022, pastel, 12 x 8.5 inches
flor para Hilma (nuevas energías II) [flower for Hilma (new energies II)], 2022, pastel, 15.7 x 11.8 inches
hojas (nuevas energías XI) [leaves (new energies XI)], 2022, pastel, 15.7 x 11.8 inches

BOTTOM, LEFT TO RIGHT

lazos (nuevas energías VIII) [knots (new energies VIII)], 2022, pastel, 15.7 x 11.8 inches
fenomeno (nuevas energías IV) [phenomenon (new energies IV)], 2022, pastel, 15.7 x 11.8 inches
mis flores (nuevas energías V) [my flowers (new energies V)], 2022, pastel, 15.7 x 11.8 inches

TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT

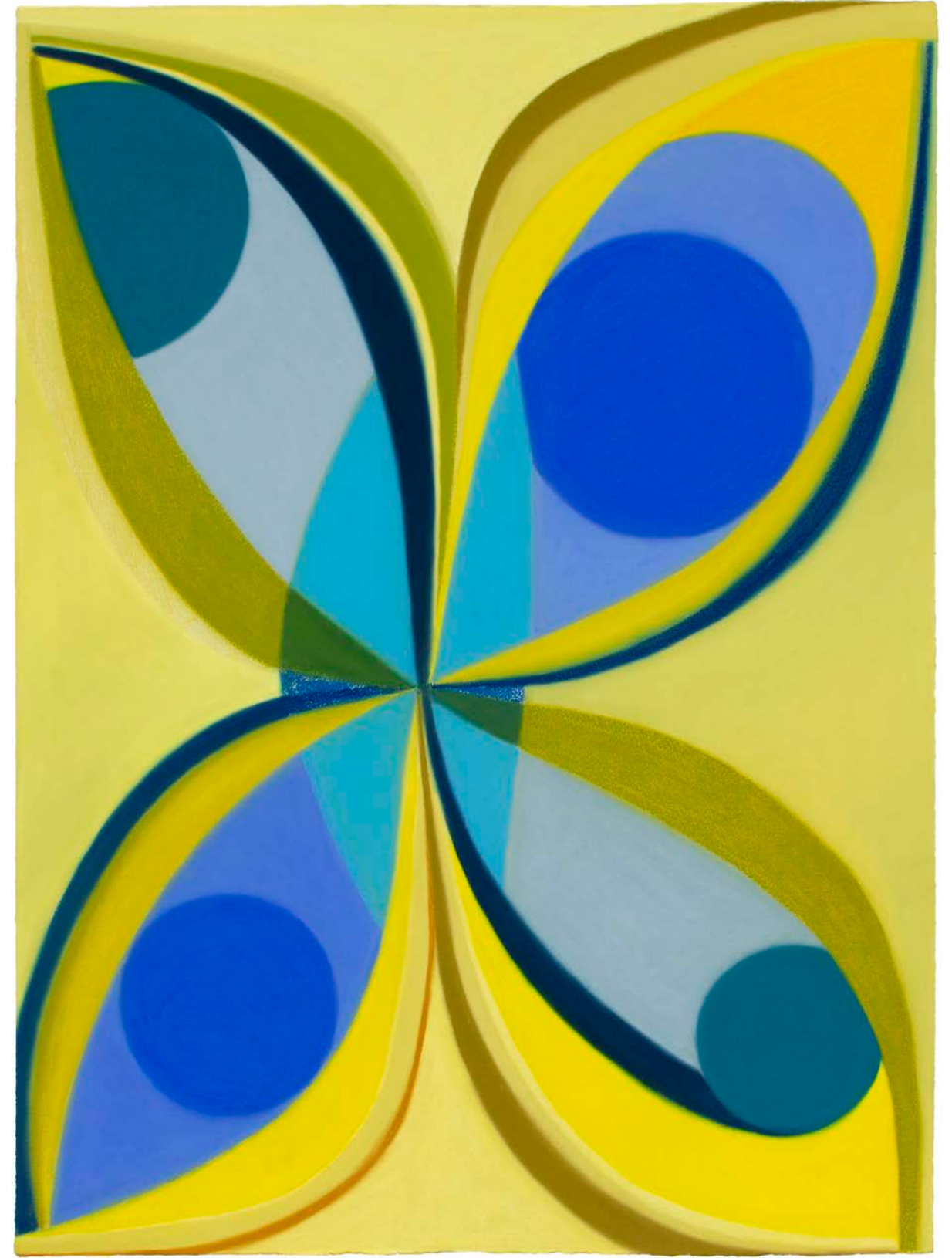
mirándola (nuevas energías IX) [looking at her (new energies IX)], 2022, pastel, 15.7 x 11.8 inches
estallido (nuevas energías VI) [burst (new energies VI)], 2022, pastel, 15.7 x 11.8 inches
orb (nuevas energías III) [orb (new energies III)], 2022, pastel, 15.7 x 11.8 inches

BOTTOM, LEFT TO RIGHT

dos olas o fuegos (nuevas energías X) [two waves or fires (new energies X)], 2022, pastel, 15.7 x 11.8 inches
Circuito (verde) [Circuit (green)], 2023, pastel, 15.7 x 11.8 inches
Circuito (rosado) [Circuit (pink)], 2023, pastel, 15.7 x 11.8 inches



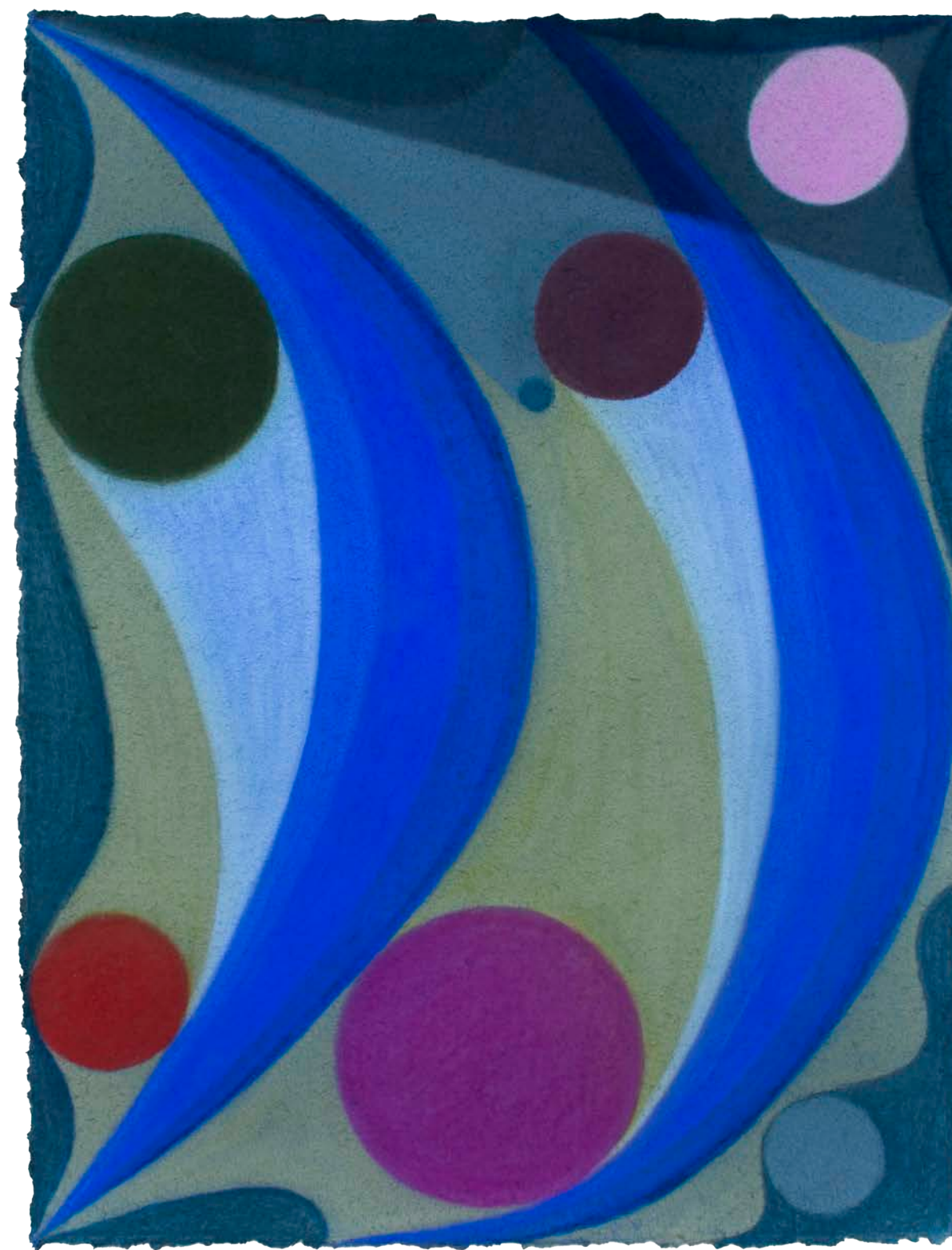
Danzante (or four circles) [Dancer (o quatro círculos)]
2023, pastel, 30 x 22 inches



Rebotar (or four circles) [Bounce (o quatro círculos)]
2023, pastel, 30 x 22 inches

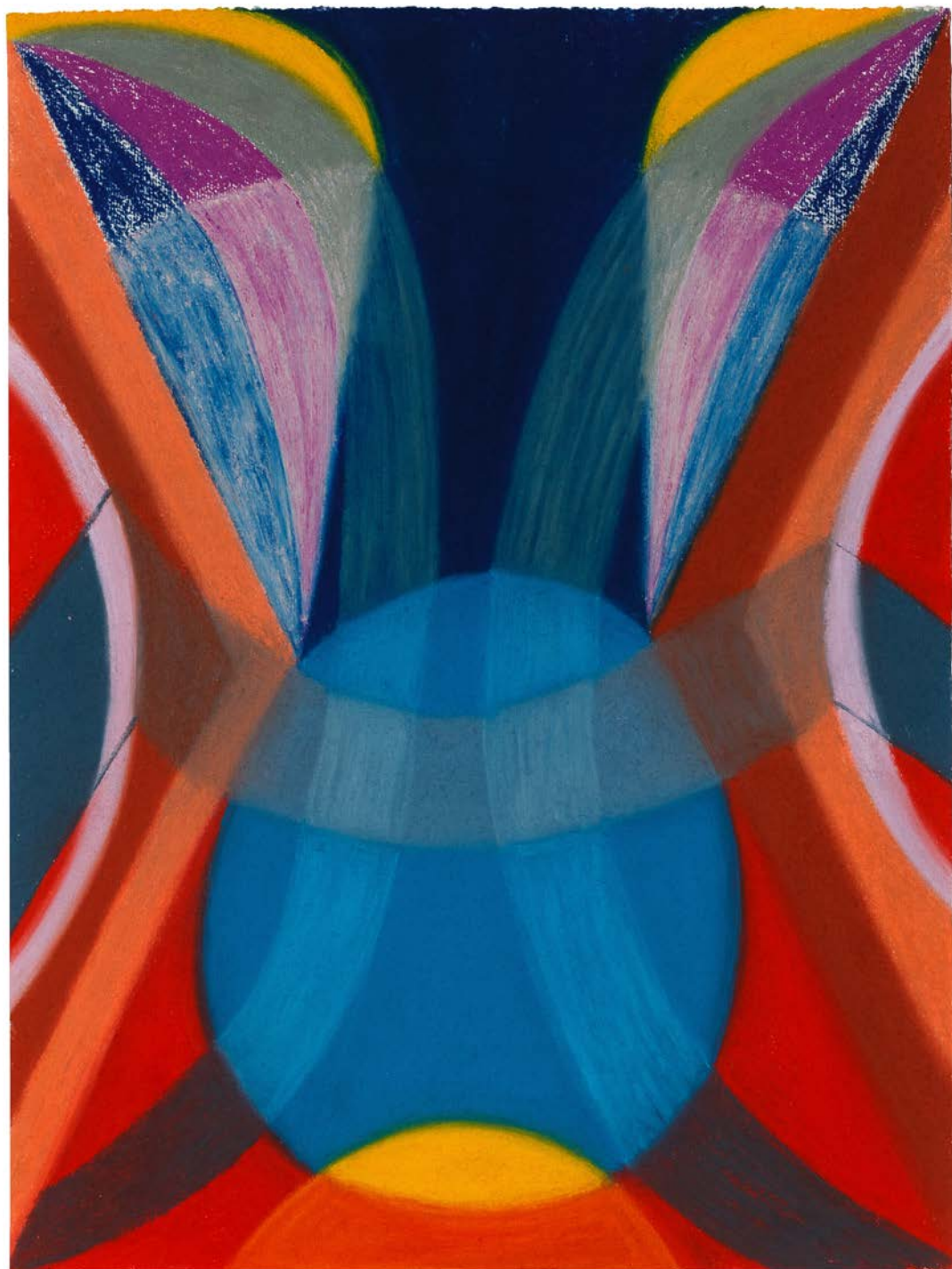


zing zing zing boing (or five circles and a sun)
2023, pastel on handmade paper, 22.5 x 19.5 inches

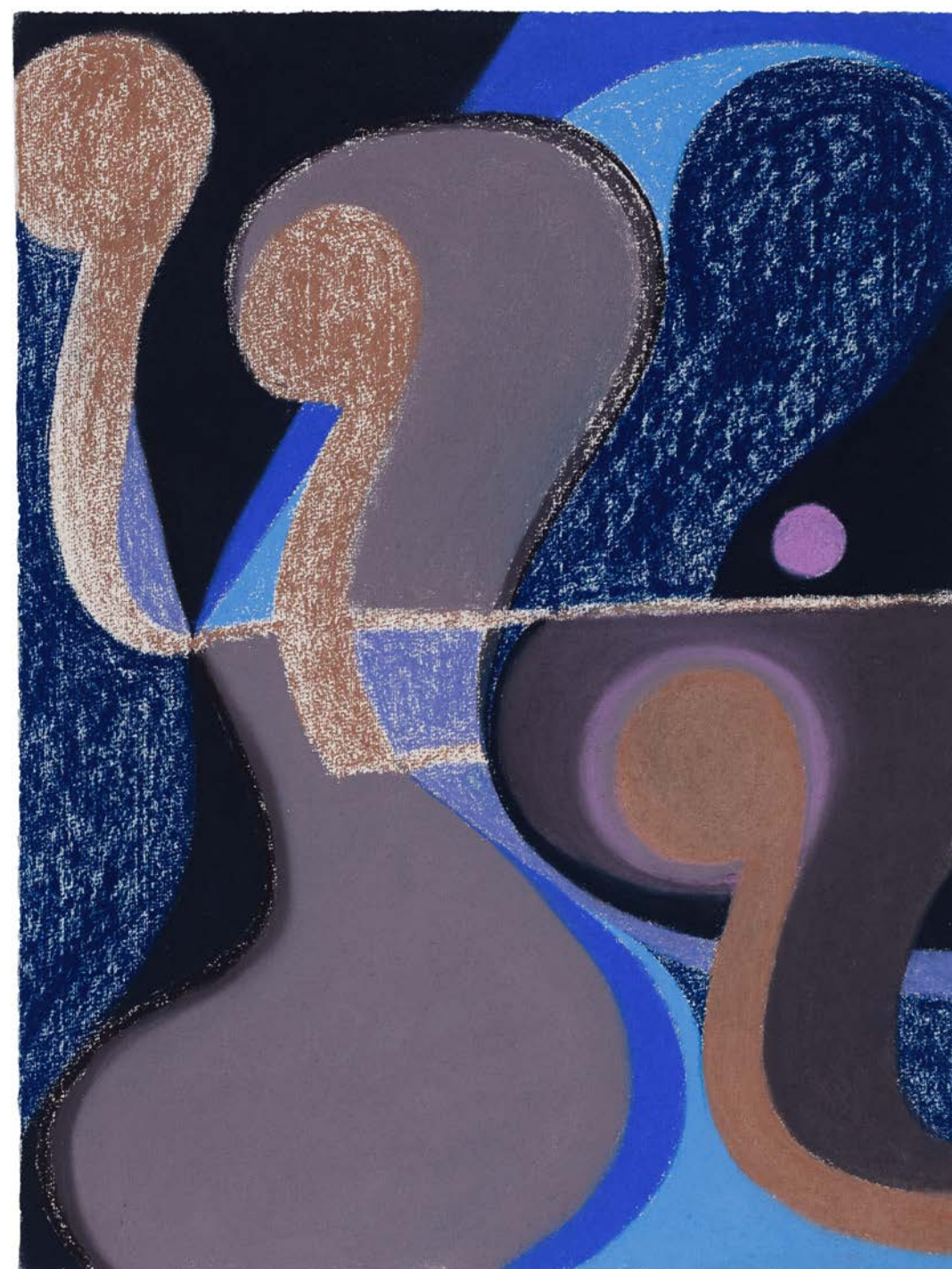


ciclo nocturno [night-time cycle]
2023, pastel on handmade paper, 22.5 x 19.5 inches

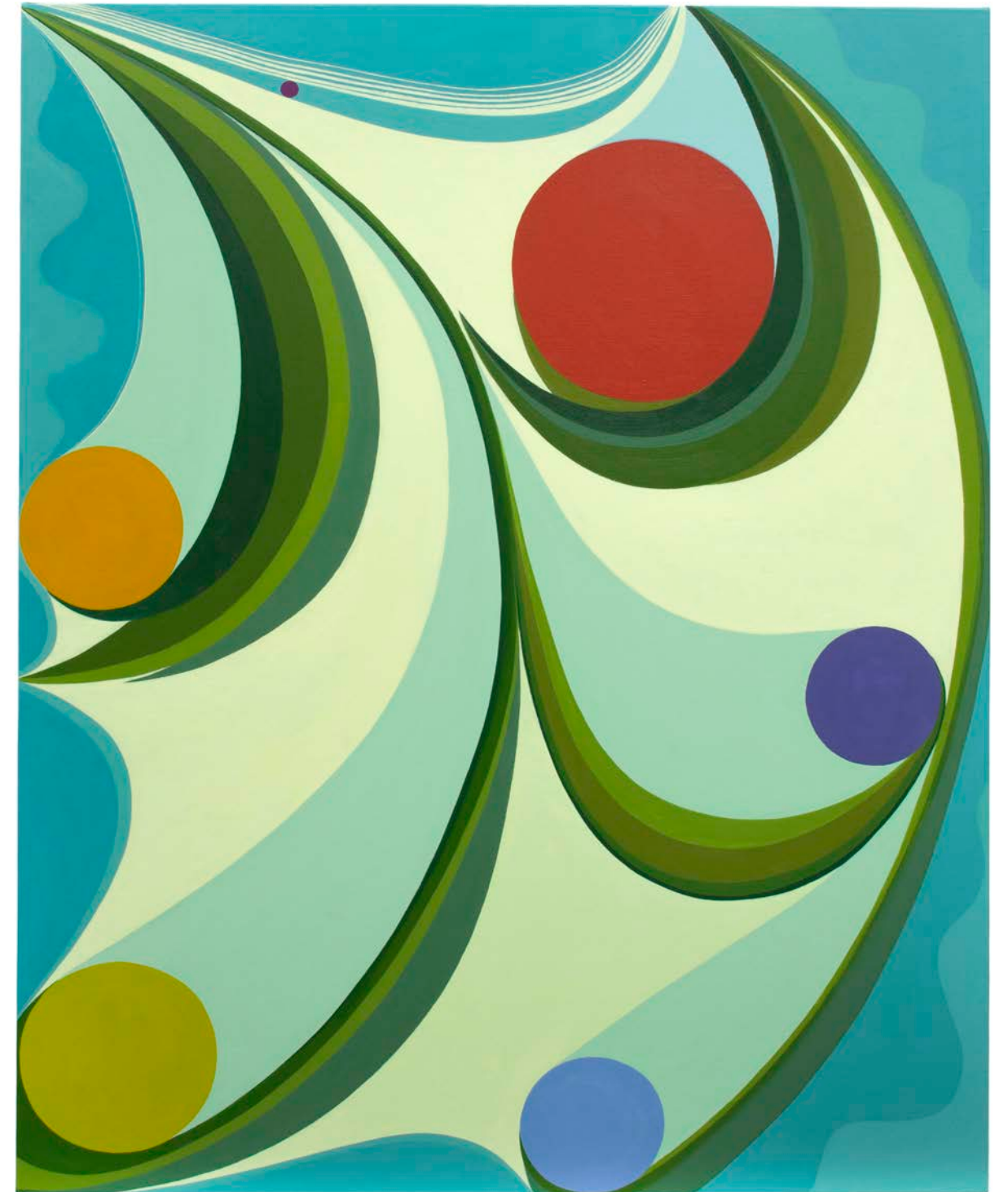




ve-lo-ci-dad (reloj de arena) [ve-lo-ci-ty (sand clock)]
2023, pastel, 15.7 x 11.8 inches



notas (sonidos del paisaje) [notes (sounds of the landscape)]
2023, pastel, 15.7 x 11.8 inches



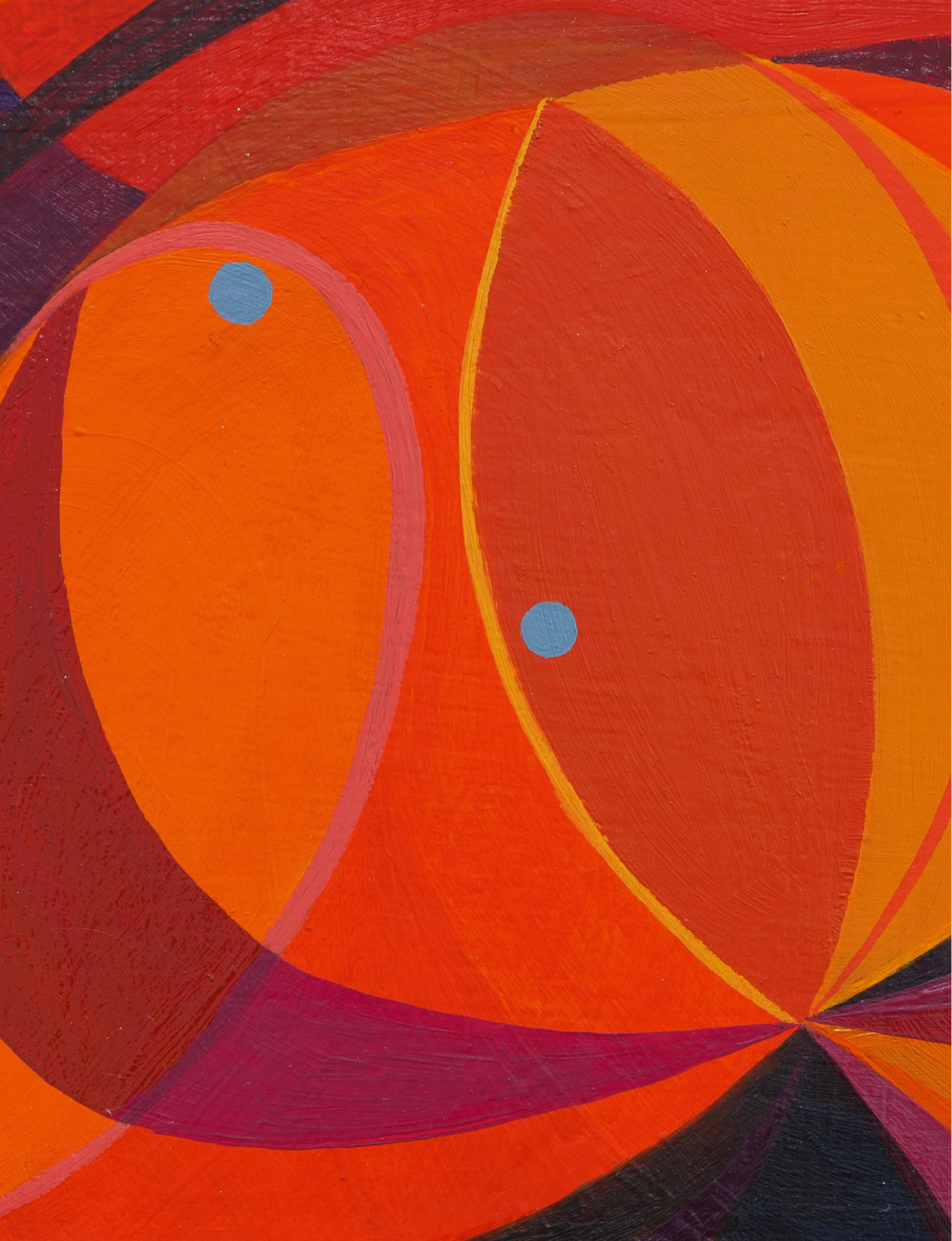
Conchita/Plantita (or five circles and a sun) [little seashell/little plant (o cinco círculos y un sol)]
2023, oil on linen, 43.25 x 35.38 inches



Rebotar (or four circles) II [Bounce (o quatro círculos) II]
2023, pastel, 15.7 x 11.8 inches



Rebotar (or four circles) [Bounce (o quatro círculos)]
2023, oil on linen, 59.06 x 51.18 inches



ALL FUTURES
CONTAIN THEIR
PAST (ON BEVERLY
ACHA'S RECENT
PAINTINGS)

VALENTINA JAGER



Parentheses are a seed (a world inside another). Parentheses are pause (and the pause of a pause is movement). Parentheses are indirect speech (a space that fits the critique of one's own thoughts). Parentheses are a crack in the text where inside and outside bleed into each other (below these rounded walls). Parentheses are a (cushion), a [box], a pair of (cupped hands holding water). Parentheses introduce doubt, the idea that the main text might not be enough to hold thought in its entirety, that the seemingly invisible borders of the page are very much there, and one needs a drawer to hide secrets from the brightness of the page (so here I pour myself naked).

Parentheses have a bad reputation (that what they hold is unessential), but they hold galaxies inside a marble. What they do is create space (and time, for that matter) inside the main text—that surveilling parent dictating what one can and cannot do (mostly cannot or should not), because Main Text likes it clean and hierarchical, and relegates the misfits elsewhere [often translations, asiders (the others)]. Yet the graphic presence of these space-time ruptures of text marks their importance.

Parentheses are not enclosures but openings:

(I held one of Beverly Acha's painting titles. It was handed to me inside the envelope of parentheses. I then collected all of the titles, placing them on my desk lying flat, all those pockets holding words, pieces of words, even sounds: the phonetics of one the most streamed songs of the past years¹—*gira (des-paH-si-toH, des-pa-ci-to) [spin (sL-OH-Lee, slow-ly)]*—). And so, I looked at her work again with all the fragments of names, some palpitating sounds inside soft bladders while other actions, instructions, and imperatives were kept in brackets often used in technical manuals. I suddenly noticed how all punctuation had already fallen from the page onto the paintings: all those symbols that speed or slow time in language, visible traces of invisible utterances).

In a novel within the short story *El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan* (1941)—a meta-novel—, Jorge Luis Borges writes of Ts'ui Pen's writing. Ts'ui Pen, a fictional man of power as governor of Yunnan, renounces his position to write a novel and build a maze for all men to get lost. For that to happen, the maze had to be infinite (as so the novel), and for it to be infinite, all possible and endless endings had to be formulated. For that to happen, he could not be a governor, of course, as writing requires time. It is a never-ending story to be forever shaped. In the unraveling of the story a riddle is set: whether this project is even possible, if time is graspable without a singular outcome, or rather in all its simultaneousness. The labyrinth and the novel are all one same

1 Fonsi, Luis. feat Daddy Yankee. "Despacito", single Despacito, 2017. Universal Latin. Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/track/6habFhsOp2NvshLv26DqMb?si=3853a4ce546e4ae2>

Fig. 1. (left) *gira (des-paH-si-toH, des-pa-ci-to) [spin (sL-OH-Lee, slow-ly)]*, 2021-2023, oil on canvas, 72 x 60 inches



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

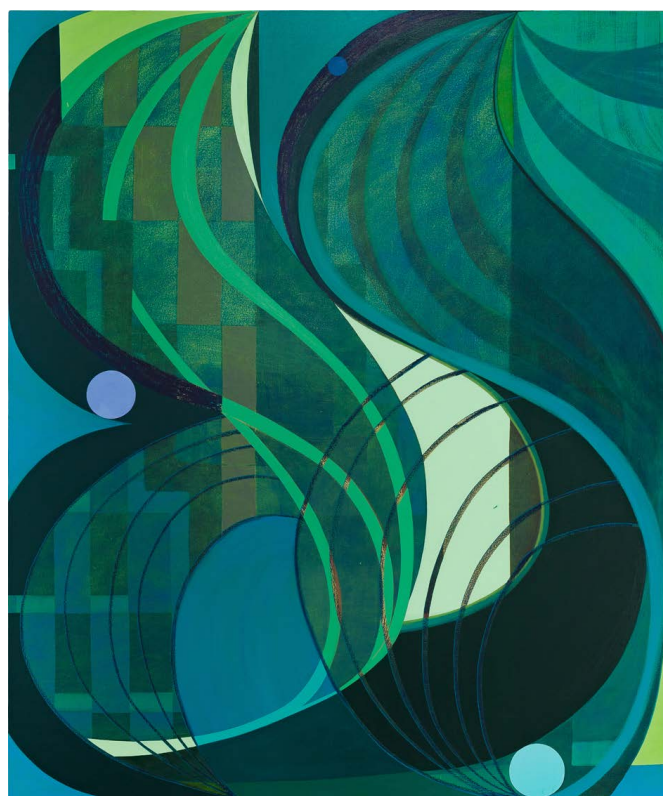


Fig. 4

Fig. 2. *las Arcas (o esa luz deslumbrante) [the Arcas (or that blinding light)]*, 2020-2023, oil on canvas, 22 x 18 inches

Fig. 4. *round and round (o la memoria, lighthouses and the tides) [vueltas (or memory, faritos y mareas)]*, 2021-2023, oil on canvas, 72 x 60 inches

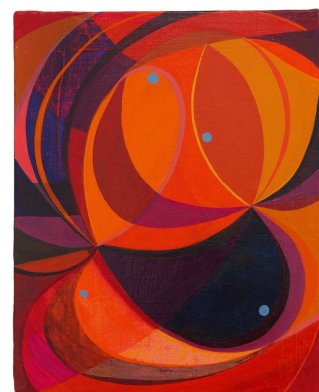


Fig. 5

Fig. 3. *misterios del universo (las violetas de mami l) [mysteries of the universe (mom's violets l)]*, 2020-2022, oil on canvas, 22 x 18 inches

Fig. 5. *misterios del universo (loop de loop) [mysteries of the universe (loop de loop)]*, 2022-2023, oil and acrylic on canvas, 10 x 8 inches

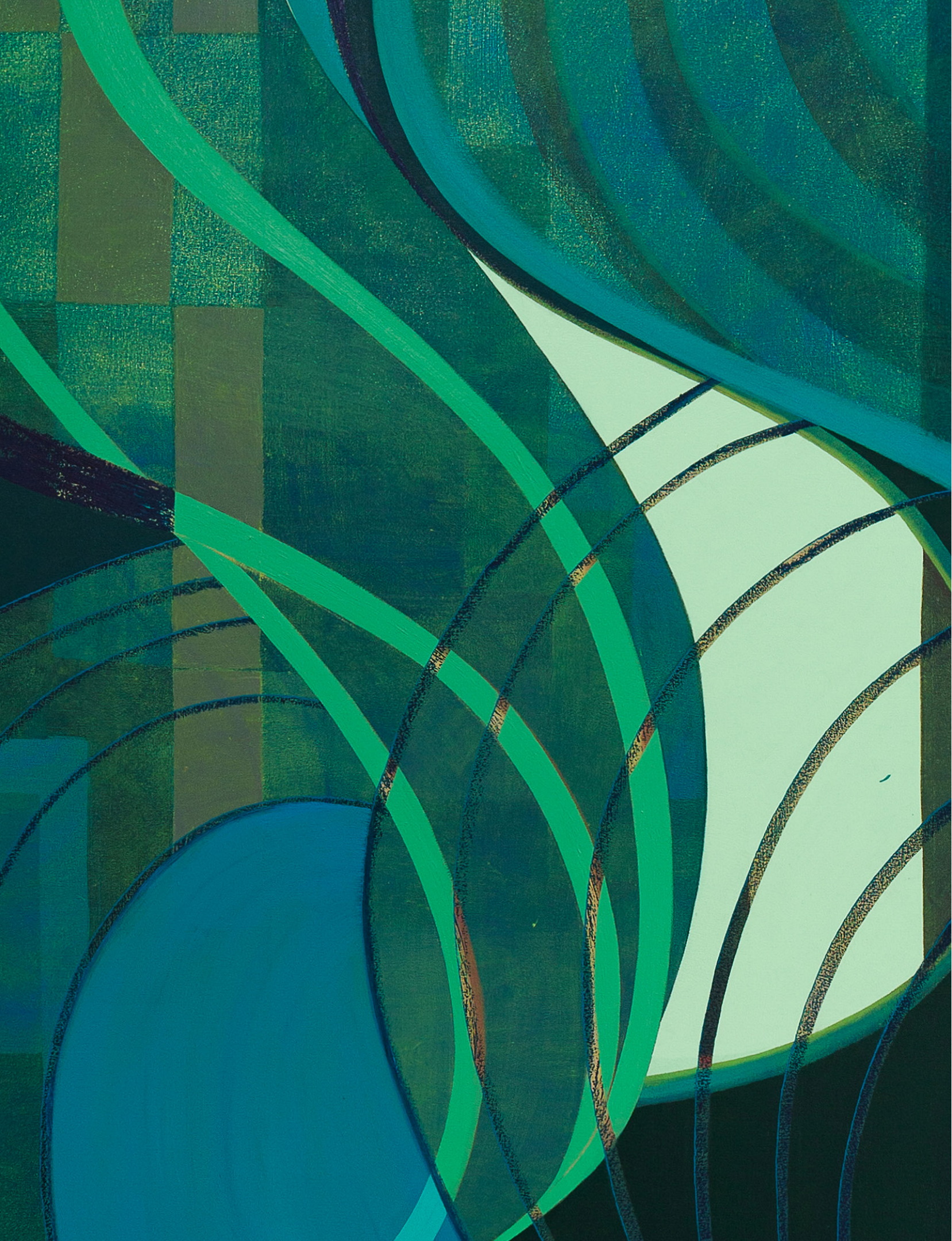
infinite project with one single beginning: the beginning of the writer writing it or the beginning of the reader's reading, an engagement, and a surrender to time spent.

As a teacher, I often ask myself how to show process during crit sessions. In a writing course, that happens organically. A text is subject to change as long as it's not published (and even then). The text is workshopped, talked about, and modified if wanted. One of a thousand versions will exist on a hard drive like this: Acha.v2.0, Acha_final, Acha_final_final. Many of the possible versions may and will exist simultaneously while I write this piece on Beverly Acha's work (this "while" has already happened as you read it). A painting is a different story. When a painted painting shows itself before a class (or a critic or an admirer), it is vulnerably finished. To an extent, maybe so, yet it presents itself with no backup plan. If we know how to read the painting, we—the students, the teacher, and the audience—will notice the decisions taken to get to this final version in front of us. Still, most commonly, all doubts will be omitted from the final form: another layer on top, a glaze, a shape overlapping and erasing. That that was, is not anymore.

This invisibility is rarely the case with Beverly Acha's work. I am certainly not a painter, but as the reader that I am, I look for the traces of her actions to understand how shapes and colors are articulated to each other (which is to say, I do not know what Acha does, but this is what I read from what she does). If it were here, her work—in person—, presented to us—the audience—, (for example the painting *misterios del universo (loop de loop) [mysteries of the universe (loop de loop)]* (2022-2023; fig. 5), we could see through a gradient of purple above orange and the orange above purple and reds, the gradual diminishing of the flow of the timeline. She might (I assume) have changed her mind with a lilac at the top left corner and has painted it over with orange and red, just leaving a thin line residue of its existence—the scattered remnants of alternate timelines of creation embedded within the surface of paint, with cerulean ellipses (literally) dispersed all over the painting. (...).

Three dots form an ellipsis. Three dots take the space of a thought, of both silence and the reminders of what is to be said—the unsaid. Three dots are a stand-in for the unfinished. You won't find ellipses in Acha's titles, where everything to be said has been written. You may see them only in the space of her abstraction.

Acha tells me the story of Painting and the story of her paintings shown at her two recent solo shows of 2023: *In the Loop* at Emerson Dorsch, Miami, and *Nothing Static* at Deanna Evans Projects, NYC. For the first show, she made most of the works in different places over a period of time, between 2020 and 2023. Acha was inhabiting different spaces; some were started that year, 2020, in her hometown, Miami, FL; some in 2021 in Fishers Island, NY; and some at her newfound home, New York City, in 2022. Some paintings and works from before—a before that might have happened in any of these cities—were tied to the location where they were painted (visibly throbbing with the vibrance of Miami flora in their surfaces, for example, or



a mix of soft and hard shadow edges cast by the light in northern cities), to then be sealed in boxes and shipped to a new place (somewhat contaminated or not by multiple of Acha’s life experiences). So, things that were not finished were continued somewhere else. Decisions respond to past decisions, as they are locked to every different moment of their making. Like beginning a sentence somewhere and finishing it elsewhere, to quote Acha herself. There is a recognition of the space outside (outside the painting, outside the house, outside the moving rental truck) and an acknowledgment of the place that perception has in the containment of that outside. Every painting contains the worlds of its making. Paintings started (or made) on Fishers Island still contain the brightness of Miami’s vegetation, as Acha carried her decisions around in Uhauls to deal with the consequences of those choices in a different place at a different time.

There is a particular story I like about a small painting: *las Arecas (o esa luz deslumbrante)* [*the Arecas (or that blinding light)*] (2020-2023; fig. 2). Acha packed her work, her clothes, and her materials and moved out of Miami. Some of the work was still unfinished, as was *las Arecas*, yet as she looked at this piece in the New York light months later, she considered it done. I like it because it speaks to me about process. The process that happens inside the painting while layering material (in this case, paint) and the process occurring inside the artist who opens her storage to let the in-progress painting reveal herself as finished.

This process I speak of is probably more visible in other of Acha’s paintings, where changes in thought, where trial and error, where the train of thought took a different route, and the stages of the painting are perceptible to the eye on the surface of the painting. In *misterios del universo (las violetas de mami I)* [*mysteries of the universe (mom’s violets I)*] (2020-2022; fig. 3), the surface doesn’t act as a two-dimensional image anymore but as a series of explicit traces of time superimposed and simultaneous. I do not mean that the third dimension of volume is present, but that this three-dimensionality implies line, surface, and time. A pinwheel (or rather a flower (a violet)) shares both the background and foreground with some upward undulations—a thick vapor that is rather solid. Both flower and vapor hold a duality of opacity and transparency, solidity and porosity (a certain percent of voidness in that same solid) that allows them to share the same space simultaneously. The painting is subdivided into four quadrants, but it is not fragmentary: one can see the lines demarcating the space, but figures don’t care for borders, they integrate them.

The larger the painting, the longer the decision-making process took and the more physical spaces it inhabited while “unfinished.” In *round and round (o la memoria, lighthouses and the tides)* [*vueltas (or memory, faritos y mareas)*] (fig. 4), a work painted from 2021 to 2023, waves push architecture to a distant ground. It happens to me often with these paintings that I cannot tell if such waves were there to begin with, in a sketch somewhere on Beverly’s desk, or subtly traced on the canvas, or if such buildings were built (rather painted) sometime before, as the tides were low and human efforts for solidity had more chances for fruition, and water came later, after all, rectangle blocks were strategically positioned on the left side of the canvas—hence waves (like undulating clef symbols) submerge it all in that light-green blue Miami water. I have established a personal relationship with this painting as it reminds

me of my first-ever memory (which is an image) or at least the first-ever memory my brain can situate as a first one. Like Acha, I spent my early childhood in a bilingual beach city, just on a different ocean. I am not a great swimmer, but I precociously learned how to survive the Pacific as my mother would take me paddling its ocean waters. This I know thirdhand: I was on a kayak on my own (my mother was paddling a different one), and we were coming back to shore as I got caught by a wave. All I remember is light: a blue-greenish light and bubbles coloring the rows of motionless resorts on land. I do not keep this as a memory of drowning, only the abstract image of light and water with geometric shapes behind it. This is the first time I put this image into written language, but maybe, as Acha's titles, it had already lived in my brain, both in English and Spanish, alternating which one went first: one language seized by the rip while the other awaited stoically ashore.

While multiple parallel universes can exist at the same time, only one version of history or alternative history can be dominant at any given moment. Alternative histories or plotlines often involve supplanting the original timeline with a new sequence of events. Hence, every unfinished painting would replace another, and every new response would open another narrative line. I have known Beverly for six years and learned how she stretches these opportunities until the end. I see a doubling of *misterios del universo (las violetas de mami I)* (2020-2022; fig. 3) in a larger painting *gira (des-paH-si-toH, des-pa-ci-to) [spin (sL-OH-Lee, slow-ly)]* (2021-2023; fig. 1), a former and later painting, that was started before and came into completion a year after the first one. The main element, a pinwheel-flower, is mirrored in both paintings, yet in *gira*, the solid areas are more extended, and thin lines of orange and greenish-yellow undulate around the blades of the wheel. The parentheses of the title also allow different movements (of language) to happen. First, additional information appears in its phonetic spelling: *des-paH-si-toH*. I mean additional, as *gira*, what would be considered the main part of the title, is not phonetically spelled. *Despacito*, *slowly*, describes the action, the speed of an action or the speed of an instruction. Following the phonetic spelling, we may utter what we don't speak or comprehend. In Spanish "gira" could be the verb for both the spinning of the pinwheel or an imperative for the audience to move (*you spin*). May you speak an unknown language, unknown to me, but dissected to still be pronounced. A mirroring also happens in the text when a bracket brings the translation to the front. It is the translation of the first words, yet it is not the translation of the title (*it IS part the title*). A translation as an original is spinning; it reverses the cycle of communication by transgressing the oppositionality between primary and secondary text, while it also alternates between speech and written.

A majority of the work included in the NY solo show *Nothing Static* began and was finished in Acha's NY studio. Most were started and finished at once in 2023. Compared to her former body of work, time-space in *Nothing Static* happens intrinsically, as it happens inside the painting almost exclusively. For instance, while working on *landscape is a kind of feeling / todo and nada / everything y nothing (an exquisite corpse)* (2021-2023; see p. 19), Acha used the format of the exquisite corpse (a 1920's Surrealist game) to play a game with herself. She would cover up sections of the painting to enforce both an exercise of memory and forgetfulness until she reached a point where the composition needed resolving. This is all part of the

exquisite corpse, a way to hold a space for surprise, to surprise herself even, and that can only occur not by planning the painting but by planning the planning of the painting. Acha builds a field for playing with colors, forms, and shapes, a field where her decisions in disguise of color, form, and shapes can take on an active process. Inside these fields is a relationship of scale, the largest unit in the universe is reflected in the smallest, and so the longest is reflected in the briefest of gestures.

For the possibility of improvisation to exist as a methodological approach to work with, Acha creates the space for improvisation itself to happen. This means that the process is not a sudden burst of inspiration but a holding of space and time for it to bubble. One would call that work. The holding of studio time allows it to be inhabited by the paintings, a time that unfolds the decisions of the past and the current moment of making. Acha's methodology allows multiple spaces to exist on the surface of the painting, which simultaneously results from a process of layering, revealing traces of time, and playing with shapes and symmetry inside the painting. Some paintings explicitly display arches as they encounter liminality, a gateway into another dimension that doesn't exist in our physical world. But more often, this gateway is the entrance to the painting itself, the edge of the painting, in which the right for abstraction is a vortex to other revolving continuums.

(...).

VALENTINA JAGER is an artist, writer, and translator from Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. The core of her practice as an artist-researcher is founded on the relationship between materiality and language, the explicit evidence of the writing body, and its conditions of production. Jager is a 2024-25 Elaine G. Weitzen ISP Studio Program Fellow at the Whitney Independent Study Program in New York. Since 2012, when she first encountered it, Valentina has become a Butoh enthusiast.

An abstract painting featuring a large, bright yellow circle with a darker yellow center, surrounded by concentric rings of yellow and orange. The background is a warm orange with vertical brushstrokes.

GAZE OF DAYS/
MIRADA DE DIAS
— 10 NOTES

AMANDA LECHNER



For this short text I am glancing at the form of Goethe's *Theory of Colours* crossed with Ann Truit's *Day Book* and Ovid's *Book of Days* without actively appropriating any of them. These texts' short form musings, poetry of place, hypothesis and narratives of experience line up with my exposure to Beverly Acha's works and what I understand about how she conceives of them.

- I. A drawing is a note on a day or moment. A painting a note on a season.
- II. Insists that response is valuable and that reflection is necessary.
- III. Full of questions
 - A. Every look is a question
 - B. Every mark a translated document of some thing in time, every mark that overwrites is a new question (was it — is it more like this?)
- IV. Are these funny? In *double spiral (blooms)* (fig. 1) is this small yellow ochre circle that seems to carry the weight of the whole painting a little joke/riddle/ footnote painted just for me? Look at this fingernail-sized ochre circle on the bottom edge of the canvas secretly proving up the whole green form-mass! The logic of this painting dictates the that circles hold the image together with the implied tension of the canvas edges. The grape-sized light yellow-orange center circle holds a gravitational pull around which every green-ish shape eddies while they are also blocked in by the bottom two dark circles and two light circles that bind the top corners.
- V. 05/01/2024
 - A. Dear Bev, Today I am stuck in the airport in Chicago trying to get up to Maine to help teach fresco at Skowhegan, (where the two of us met in 2018). I am thinking about the paintings I saw you make there and how they began to breathe in a different way in that weather/ environment/community. I saw you adapt existing starts of painting

Fig. 1. (left) *double spiral (blooms)*, 2020-2023, oil on canvas, 60 x 48 inches



Fig. 2. (bottom left) *spectrum*, 2018, buon fresco, approx dims: 12 x 12 feet (photo credit: Luis Mejicanos, taken in 2023)
 Fig. 3. (top right) Photo taken by Amanda Lechner of Beverly Acha up on the scaffolding with her fresco in the Fresco Barn at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2018.

to the new place. Sun calendars became lake like and field like. Eye-like shapes emerged as if the looking watching listening learning we were doing was reflected back. I most remember the interaction between magentas, ultramarines and pthalos brush-dragged and modulated by cadmium lemon creating the bright to deep greens of new plants and dark red-midnights that somehow describe walking in the dark without illumination. Or like the afterimage of looking at the sky through the trees during the golden hour of the day.

- B. P.S. : Speaking of the golden hour (but the fresco kind) I am so curious to see how your near monumental triangular buon fresco (fig. 2) has fared over the last several years. Those shared 2 days scaffolded 25 feet up in the fresco barn painting day into night with delight, urgency, fervor and fury! I remember your painting as a rippling light spectrum as if dawn through dusk refracted off the lake as sine wave or streamer.
- VI. There is a state I have witnessed of Beverly that most painters know well—being in the painting. It’s the best place, though sometimes holds us in place longer than intended. It’s the embrace that demands just one more mark, one more color mix, one more try. I envy the way Beverly not only finds that state of abandon in a painting session, but how she returns to the canvas again and again willing to completely change a works’ trajectory seemingly from inside the work.
- VII. This year (2024)
 - A. Beverly visited my painting class at Virginia Tech. Her artist talk and short “color walk” painting workshop with some of my students has so resonated with them that it has transformed their work going forward. The realization that experience and time can be translated as something that is less-objective or non pictorial was a big turning point for these students (I was jealous/mildly-annoyed that none of the pathways to abstraction I introduced took root with them, but gladly accepted their thanks for bringing in Bev).
 - B. That observing and deciding can simultaneously be a time-based and image-making process is what a close look at Beverly’s paintings offers to teach.
 - C. Decide, decide, re-decide, decide, un-decide, de-decide, decide, decide, decide.
- VIII. Simpaticos
 - A. Though she and I rarely have occupied them at the same time, I



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

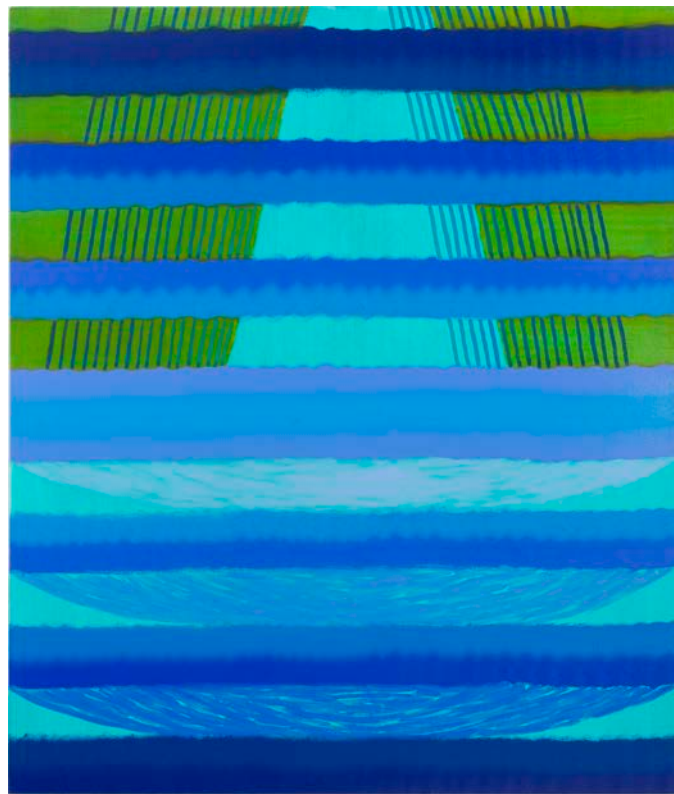


Fig. 6

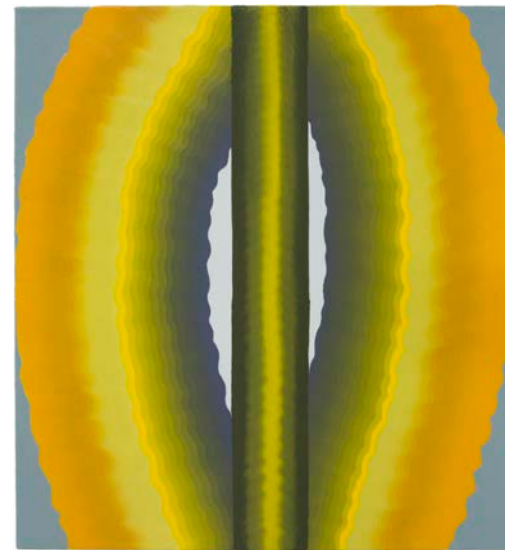


Fig. 7.



Fig. 8



Fig. 9

Fig. 4. *bouquet (borrowed flowers) [ramo (flores prestadas)]*, 2023, oil on canvas, 22 x 18 inches
 Fig. 5. *landscape and suns (paysaje y sols)*, 2021-2023, oil on canvas, 22 x 18 inches
 Fig. 6. *Mirage*, 2018, oil on canvas, 52 x 44 inches
 Fig. 7. *Untitled (Fishers Island Waves)*, 2017, oil on canvas, 22 x 20 inches
 Fig. 8. *Double Archway I*, 2018, egg tempera on panel, 10 x 8 inches
 Fig. 9. *Doubles IV*, 2018, oil on panel, 17 x 13 inches

am very familiar with many of the environments that have guided Beverly's paintings—we have had some parallel habitats. I have loved seeing how the work made while in hold of the desert Southwest differs from painting done on the Atlantic coast, NYC, an upstate barn and the middle west.

- B. Beverly and I also share some foundational practice in learning painting and drawing via direct observation. We both came to learn the color practices of Albers one or two degrees removed but by teachers in his pedagogical lineage. We have both brought these ways of working forward with our own respective students while finding ways to keep these practices buoyant and adaptive.

IX. Recent paintings made in the Sharpe-Walentas studios and other recent NYC works.

- A. These paintings have a palette of the tempered colors of the city. They have a honed vibrancy though, probably owing to the expert use of simultaneous contrast and attention to value—the relationships between dark and light. The mixtures take on a little of the opacity of concrete and cool winter Brooklyn light while still sampling the pop of color (what Johannes Itten called “extension”) like the winter sunset or faded fluorescent streamer marking a water main or the rare sight of a goldfinch. In *bouquet (borrowed flowers) [ramo (flores prestadas)]* (fig. 4) and *landscape and suns (paysaje y sols)* (fig. 5) a circle or orb (red and yellow respectively) play this role of optical beacon.
- B. These paintings are built both in how the layers work but also two-dimensionally as compositions. Shapes teeter on one another stacked in ways that seem related to the vertically of city construction and its resulting optics/pov, yet they seem to actively resist the edges and angles of the built environment, in favor of the swaying, circular and serpentine.
- C. Are these paintings “built”?
 1. (They are obviously painted and unless we are talking about Elizabeth Murray or Sam Gilliam or Carmen Herrera—it is such a painters' conceit to talk about “building” images... but we are talking painter to painter here, right?)
 2. Some older or maybe locally different paintings seem excavated or formed as sedimentary layers or call to other natural phenomena. *Mirage* (2018; fig. 6 and 11) and *Untitled (Fishers Island Waves)* (2017; fig. 7) each speak to the moments of shifted perception—vision refracted by water,



Fig. 10. *blued into view*, 2021, oil on canvas, 56 x 42 inches

weather, light or atmosphere. It is as if these moments are remembered or recovered or shared through the process of touch applying color to surface.

Others seem like bits of film transparency stacked one on another. I see this most in Beverly's fresco and pastel works. The impossibility of paint-body and surface give way to the luminosity of the surfaces. Her small tempera and oil works from 2018, like *Double Archway I* (fig. 8) and *Doubles IV* (fig. 9) also utilize the translucent qualities of certain pigments towards optical mixing that I see brought forward in the series of blue soaked nocturnes of 2021 that include *blued into view* (fig. 10).

X. >>

- A. Looking
- B. Care
- C. Frenzy
- D. Investment
- E. Doubt and confidence and doubt and...

AMANDA LECHNER is a visual artist and creative scholar that divides her time between Santa Fe, New Mexico and Blacksburg, Virginia. Lechner's studio practice encompasses broad approaches to drawing and painting with a focus on the contemporary use of historical and handmade material like ink, egg-tempera and fresco. Lechner has exhibited painting, drawing, and site-specific work throughout the United States. She attended Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2018 and has participated in artist residencies at the Penland School of Crafts in North Carolina, the Wassaic Project in New York, and Stove Works in Tennessee. Lechner holds the position of Assistant Professor at Virginia Tech's School of Visual Art and is a fresco instructor at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture.



TOUCHING LIGHT/
ABSORBING COLOR:
COLOR AS FACT
IN BEVERLY
ACHA'S PAINTINGS

DANNY GREENBERG



Fig. 1

LIGHT & COLOR AS TOUCH, AS SOUND

While talking to a friend on the phone I looked out the window and saw the biggest rainbow of my life—a perfect arch stretching across a hot wet summer day in New York. I took a photo (see fig. 1), but it was too big to fit in one shot and captured none of the rainbow’s magic, nor the subtle double rainbow effect as pieces of colored light refracted beside it, like glare that disintegrates at the slightest tilt of a head. This was not a June gay pride rainbow, but a dreary rainbow whose saturation increased and blurred the more of its light the eye touched. Some may refer to mixing the sensations of touch and sight as an example of synesthesia, or a perceptual phenomenon in which the stimulation of one sense leads to involuntary activation of other senses (in fact there is even a name for people who experience this, synesthetes¹). However, there is also scientific truth to the perception of light as touch, as light and color are perceived through the reflection of wavelengths into our eyes. Light receptors in the eye act as transmitters—receiving the wavelength and sending it to the brain, which produces sensations of color². So between ourselves and what we perceive is not just empty space or atmosphere and air, but an intangible and dense spectrum of wavelengths, some visible to the eye and some not.

When depicted visually, wavelengths have rhythm and resemble sound waves with peaks and valleys. Beverly Acha’s paintings capitalize on the sonic quality of color. Take for instance *notas (do re(y) (a drop of golden sun) miii faaaa soo laa tiiii d(oH))* (fig. 2) and *melodias en el silencio (sonidos del paisaje) [melodies in the silence (sounds of the landscape)]* (fig. 3). Besides the nod to the song “Do-Re-Mi” from The Sound of Music, where children bask and frolic in the pastoral landscape of Austria while learning a musical scale, the work (fig. 2) vibrates like a drop of liquid in a body of water, compounded with the vibration of color as the bottom left circle appears to dance or create an illusion of movement. In color theory this optical quaking caused by particular juxtapositions of fields of solid color is aptly called color vibration as the edge from one color to the next dances in the eye³. This vibration of color resembles the vibration of a string instrument—how a guitar string when plucked moves so quickly that it creates a transparent mass of shaking line. Color emanates from circles of sound or four drops of golden sun, which could be actual suns or false mirrors illuminated from mirages in the landscape.

melodias en el silencio (fig. 3) is comparatively an opposite or afterimage of *notas* (fig. 2). It is as though between the two works the suns have become moons, or day has transitioned to night. Though in school we are taught the subtractive color wheel (with red yellow blue primaries), or how color paints mix, the additive color wheel (with red green blue primaries), or how digital screens mix color through color light,

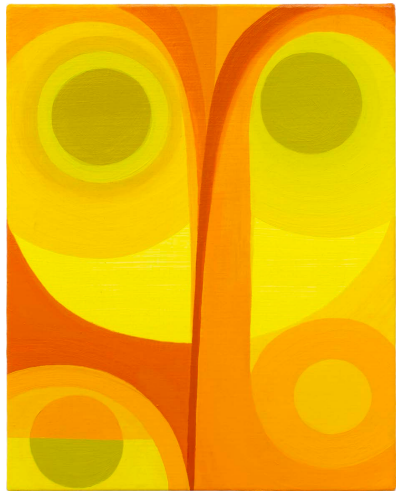


Fig. 2



Fig. 3

Fig. 1. Failed attempt to capture the magic of a double rainbow while talking to my friend on the phone.
 Fig. 2. *notas (do re(y) (a drop of golden sun) miii faaaa soo laa tiiii d(oH))*, 2022-2023, oil on canvas, 10 x 8 inches
 Fig. 3. *melodias en el silencio (sonidos del paisaje) [melodies in the silence (sounds of the landscape)]*, 2023, oil on canvas, 18 x 12 inches

uses an entirely different system of primaries and complements. The additive color wheel explains the phenomenology of the afterimage—or the effect that occurs when a ghost of an image remains in the eye after staring at something bright for too long. For instance, if you stare at a bright yellow light, the after image (or image still glowing in the eye even after you look away) will be blue. This is because in the additive light color wheel the complement of blue is yellow, whereas in the subtractive pigment color wheel the complement of blue is orange.

Whereas *notas* (fig. 2) spoke to color as substance—as it emanates from the sun (drops of golden sun), *melodias* (fig. 3) depicts a lower vibration, an afterimage or a memory of color. Due to its darker, analogous color palette, we have to let our eyes adjust in order to see the subtle variations in hue, much like when working in a traditional photo darkroom you need to wait until your eyes adjust to the dim light in order to see. A landscape in silence or in pitch black is still filled with movement, increasing in visibility as the eye adjusts. Take for instance John Cage’s 4’33” an experimental musical performance in which a pianist is instructed to follow a music score lacking annotation, resulting in four and a half minutes of total silence. But of course, in total silence one notices every other atmospheric sound, from the air conditioning, to subtle body movements of the audience who wait in anticipation.

COLOR OUTSIDE / INSIDE THE BODY

The question of the origin of color was tackled in the 17th century by Sir Isaac Newton, who, through an experiment with two prisms, discovered that white light is the combination of all colors, and that the prism separates color rather than holding color within it. This experiment is all about where color light was held— not in the prism, but in white light itself. In essence, light is a physical thing all around us absorbed and reflected by everything it touches. This discovery built the scientific foundation to our understanding of color as what our eyes perceive. Perceived color reflects off of a surface, however, every object has a second color, imperceptible to the human eye, consisting of the wavelengths a surface absorbs.

Prior to Newton’s famous prism experiment, Newton attempted to discern if light comes from within or outside the eye by pressing a bodkin (or a small metal looped sewing needle), “betwixt [his] eye and the bone as near to the backside of [his] eye as [he] could, and on pressing [his] eye with the end of it, there appeared several white, dark, and colored circles.”⁴ This attempt to penetrate the eye and enter into the space of sight led to the emergence of abstract color. As a kid you might have closed your eyes and pressed your fingers noticing psychedelic colors emerge from darkness, creating a kaleidoscope in your mind. This activity complicates the relationship between the eye as transmitter and light as signal, as light can also be produced in one’s eye in total darkness through pressure. Newton’s inconclusive attempt to penetrate the eye brings up an entry into how space and color operate in Acha’s painting. In Acha’s paintings it is often unclear if we are observing the interior or exterior color of forms, knowing that color has a relationship to both external space and internal forms.



Fig. 4

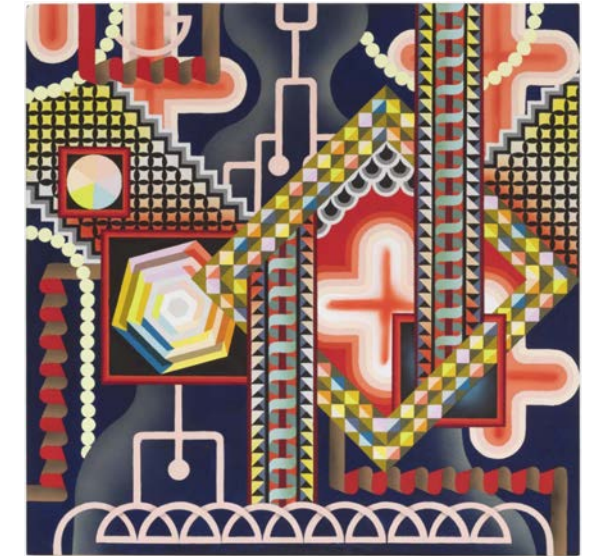


Fig. 5

In *poquito a poquito hacia el infinito* [little by little until infinity] (fig. 4) day and night, inside and outside, positive and negative, eye and sun fold into one another through the symbol of the infinity sign. The furthest circle in the upper left, among the sky, a muted yellow appears like the sun, yet the optical intensity of sunlight appears through a portal in the top loop of an infinity symbol. The blue circle reflects its color across the infinity sign and could be a diminutive earth, a blue eye, or an afterimage of the sun (in the additive color light wheel yellow is the complement of blue and vice versa). While the top loop of the infinity sign becomes a gateway (or window? or frame?) where we can look through space, along the bottom we might be looking at a solid mass and a blurry light ellipse that you would see around your field of vision if you were to wear thick white rimmed glasses. I am reminded that the color we see is wavelengths reflected off of forms, the object’s external color, and the colors absorbed by an object which are invisible, its internal colors. Is perceived, external color truer than absorbed color? Just like this idea of reflected versus absorbed wavelengths of light, the two loops of the infinity symbol mirror each other as imperfect opposites. Color wavelengths infinitely loop between internal and external space.

Like Acha, Edie Fake’s gouache works conjure the contrast of internal and external space through paintings that at one glance appear to depict architecture, but at a second look are internal organisms and bodily structures. In *Potential Donor* (fig. 5), the title of the work only allows us to imagine where the donor is located in the painting. Building off of David Getsy’s musings on the work in his lecture *The Possibility of Queer Abstraction*, if we understand the work from an exterior view, the work may depict a busy hospital as a system of interconnected data, diagrams and documents of potential donors, parts, locations, and waiting lists. If internal, the work may be a depiction of the body itself as a system, receiving a donor organ, ready to accept, reject, integrate, or recover from the trauma of shifting interior space.⁵ This collapse of interior and exterior space connects the individual body as a system

Fig. 4. *poquito a poquito hacia el infinito* [little by little until infinity], 2023, oil on canvas, 18 x 12 inches

Fig. 5. Edie Fake, *Potential Donor*, 2018, gouache and ink on panel, 20 x 20 inches. Image courtesy the Artist and Western Exhibitions.

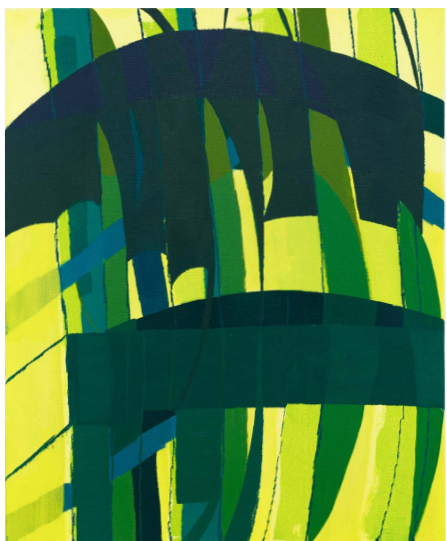


Fig. 6



Fig. 7

of parts making up a whole, in the same way that a hospital depends on many interconnected components to operate as a single entity. Similarly, Acha's works shift between internal and external forms—from eyes and portals, to planets and cosmic forms—collapsing the cosmic with the phenomenological experience of color in the body. In Acha's paintings it is often unclear if we are looking at a solid mass, or through a form with transparent layers in space.

LIGHT AND COLOR AS COSMIC

While we have distinguished light and the color it produces as both outside the body and experienced in the body, we have not fully appreciated the origin of light, which is in its most natural sense cosmic. Natural light illuminates our world on earth, but comes from the sun a few planets away. Artificial light aspires to act as natural light, but is less complex compositionally and contains less variety in wavelengths. Alternative process photographers know this fact from making anthotypes—a photo process similar to cyanotype that uses natural dyes and the principles of photosynthesis to create a photographic image with natural sunlight. Even the strongest artificial light cannot produce as clear of an anthotype as those created in sunlight. Sunlight is extraterrestrial, instantaneous compared to human speed, burning if too hot, blinding if too close, and equipped to touch everything, unless obscured by shadow. Even the smallest iterations of cosmic distance could make us too close to the sun for human comfort or die out as a species altogether. Earth sits comfortably (for now) in what is known as the Goldilocks Zone or habitable zone—“the area around a star where it is not too hot and not too cold for liquid water to exist on the surface of surrounding planets.”⁶

This cosmic quality of light is present in even the small details of our daily operations. In *las Arecas (o esa luz deslumbrante)* [the Arecas (or that blinding light)] (fig. 6), Acha

Fig. 6. *las Arecas (o esa luz deslumbrante)* [the Arecas (or that blinding light)], 2020-2023, oil on canvas, 22 x 18 inches

Fig. 7. *misterios del universo (las violetas de mami I)* [mysteries of the universe (mom's violets I)], 2020-2022, oil on canvas, 22 x 18 inches

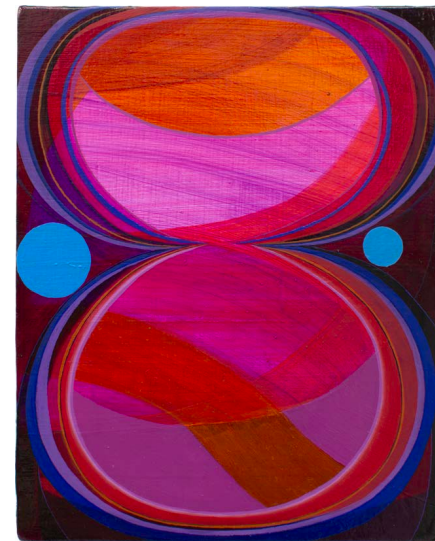


Fig. 8

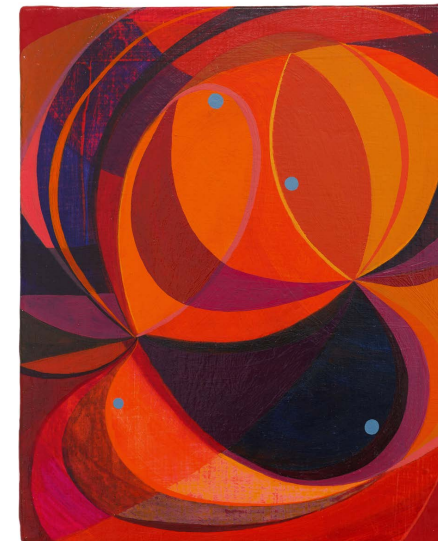


Fig. 9

responds to a memory of running among and hiding in the Areca palms of her childhood yard. Yet, in the title the Arecas are referred to as “that blinding light.” The yellow amongst the palms is the intensity of the yellow sun, which can blind even from 94 million miles away. In depicting this game of running and hiding through color and shape, Acha draws our attention to matter itself, which is as much color as it is form. Where does the form of something begin, and the color of something end?

The cosmic ray that is absorbed by and reflected from *the Arecas* interacts completely differently in her mother's violets as depicted in *misterios del universo (las violetas de mami I)* [mysteries of the universe (mom's violets I)] (fig. 7). Comparatively the light in this painting is gentle, perhaps having to traverse glass windows of a home, and diffuse artificial light. While violet is central, we begin to see other colors within it—green, yellow, magenta, orange and a bit of blue. Notably, violet is at the end of the human's visible spectrum. We cannot see ultraviolet light—a wavelength too short for our perception, shrouded in mystery—which brings us back to the work's title, *mysteries of the universe (mom's violets I)*. This is a painting that speaks equally to what we can and cannot see.

These mysteries of cosmic light extend into Acha's exploration of the passage of time in the universe and the continual rotation of planetary bodies around the sun. Take for instance, in *misterios del universo (el tiempo — ti-em-po — tii-ehm-poH)* [mysteries of the universe (time — ti-me — tY-m)] (fig. 8) and *misterios del universo (loop de loop)* [mysteries of the universe (loop de loop)] (fig. 9). *misterios del universo (el tiempo — ti-em-po — tii-ehm-poH)* (fig. 8) could depict two different passages of time through the symbol of the infinity sign. While the top ellipse contains an abstract upside down landscape with hills, the bottom ellipse holds within a curved form that appears saturated in air, but darker in water. The two forms play on one another like different time zones, or the myth that toilets flush in the opposite directions in North America and Australia. The top and bottom ellipse are asymmetric opposites with vertically

Fig. 8. *misterios del universo (el tiempo — ti-em-po — tii-ehm-poH)* [mysteries of the universe (time — ti-me — tY-m)], 2022-2023, oil and acrylic on canvas, 10 x 8 inches

Fig. 9. *misterios del universo (loop de loop)* [mysteries of the universe (loop de loop)], 2022-2023, oil and acrylic on canvas, 10 x 8 inches

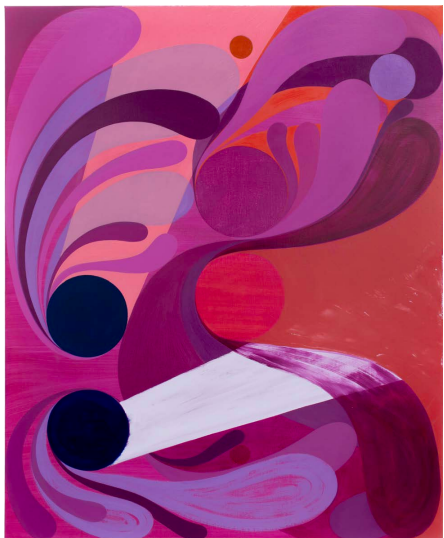


Fig. 10

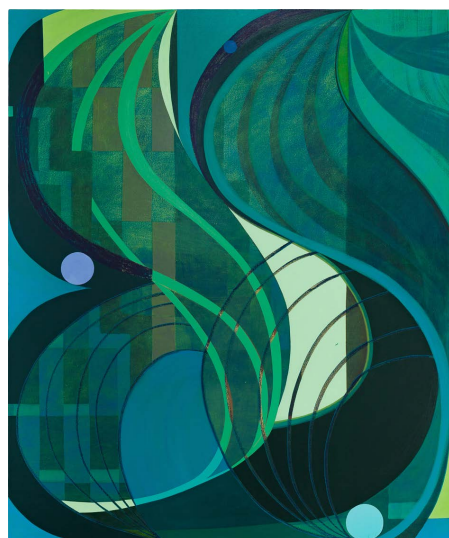


Fig. 11

inverted scenes. *misterios del universo (loop de loop)* (fig. 9) continues with the theme of infinity symbols or möbius strips, but here the loop has shattered into fractals. Rather than two loops there are several that resemble the rotational pulls of a solar system if viewed from an oblique or incorrect field of vision. It becomes impossible to locate an eyeline or pin down a specific perspective system with our typical field of vision when observing this work). Humans perceive three dimensions, yet most physicists live under the assumption that there are at least ten dimensions. There is countless research into what a 4th or 5th dimension may look like visually.⁷ Acha's work pushes at the edges of three-dimensional thinking imagining new forms of viewing.

COLOR AS TIME AS FALLING OR FLOATING

If nothing is faster than light, and light in essence co-produces color traveling as alien to our planet, absorbing and reflecting wavelengths off of Earth's curved surface, then we must understand the limits of linear perspective which dominates the history of Western painting and assumes a flat horizon line. This is a perspective system the sun would laugh at, knowing every planet it touches is curved, not flat. In Hito Steyerl's *In Free Fall: A Thought Experiment on Vertical Perspective*, Steyerl points to the limits of linear perspective noting:

Linear perspective is based on several decisive negations. First, the curvature of the earth is typically disregarded. The horizon is conceived as an abstract flat line upon which the points on any horizontal plane converge. Additionally, as Erwin Panofsky argued, the construction of linear perspective declares the view of a one-eyed and immobile spectator as a norm—and this view is itself assumed to be natural, scientific, and objective. Thus, linear

Fig. 10. *falling flowers (o quatro cometas, o que?) [flores que caen (or four comets, or what?)]*, 2023, oil on linen, 43.25 x 35.38 inches

Fig. 11. *round and round (o la memoria, lighthouses and the tides) [vueltas (or memory, faritos y mareas)]*, 2021-2023, oil on canvas, 72 x 60 inches



Fig. 12

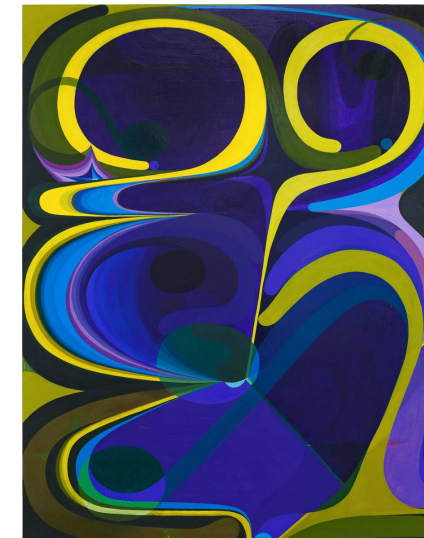


Fig. 13

perspective is based on an abstraction, and does not correspond to any subjective perception. Instead, it computes a mathematical, flattened, infinite, continuous, and homogeneous space, and declares it to be reality.⁸

Steyerl goes on to explain how understanding of the horizon to calculate position enabled colonialism and the capitalist global market, while becoming an optical paradigm of modernity. But, Steyerl argues that linear perspective is no longer the dominant perspectival form—as verticality defines our digital, surveilled, google-mapped, multiversal age, “time is out of joint and we no longer know whether we are objects or subjects as we spiral down in an imperceptible free fall.”⁹ Our solar system could be falling at all moments, but we perceive this fall as stasis.

Playing off of Steyerl's criticisms of linear perspective, we notice in Acha's paintings a lack of clear horizon line or vanishing points. Instead color loops, falls, flattens, and becomes diaphanous as it moves through space. For instance, In *falling flowers (o quatro cometas, o que?) [flores que caen (or four comets, or what?)]* (fig. 10) four circles appear to be shooting downward through space, while simultaneously petal forms spurt from the circles. Just as the title hints, floral and comet-like forms collapse together, merging a depiction of movement with a depiction of a common still life subject—flowers. This conjures similar questions we see in Steyerl's writing on perspective. For instance, if the earth is in a constant imperceptible state of falling, then even a still life of flowers may be shooting down with the earth like a comet. Or from another perspective, if we speed up time, like in time lapse videos of plant growth over months, we see that flowers are always growing or shriveling, but at a slower pace than human movement. Perhaps to the plant, decay might feel as swift as a falling meteorite—as humans we do not know if or how plants feel the passing of time. When flowers are given as a gift for an exhibition or celebration, they are usually in a state of falling—uprooted in a vase of water they will eventually die. If we speed

Fig. 12. *time keeping device or folding time (reloj de arena)*, 2020-2023, oil on canvas, 22 x 18 inches

Fig. 13. *landscape is a kind of feeling / todo and nada / everything y nothing (an exquisite corpse)*, 2021-2023, oil on canvas, 72 x 56 inches



Fig. 14. *double infinity (towards something becoming)*, 2023, oil on canvas, 22 x 18 inches

up time, the decay of a flower may be at the same intensity as a falling comet.

In *round and round (o la memoria, lighthouses and the tides) [vueltas (or memory, faritos y mareas)]* (fig. 11), circular forms may be moons or topographic views of lighthouses. Lighthouses guide ships at night, while the moon affects the earth's tides through gravitational pull, indicated in Acha's work through rippling waves. In *time keeping device or folding time (reloj de arena)* (fig. 12), we see a familiar motif with a new entry point. The circle resembles the unlock slider used to power down phones, unlock screens, or turn settings on and off, or in an analog context resembles an abacus marble. The pinching vertical gestalt resembles an hourglass yet there is no clear indication of how much sand has passed through or which side is up and which side down. Perspective in Acha's paintings is multiversal as space is described through motif, color, and transparency.

COLOR AS IDEA AS THEOREM AS FACT

As much as we know about color, there is just as much we do not know, or at least cannot perceive. Even though a small population of afab humans are tetrachromats, or have eyes that contain one additional color cone, the mighty mantis shrimp far surpasses us with 12 to 16 color cones potentially experiencing a world of color we can only imagine.¹⁰ Perhaps the false grasp of human's mastery of color, color mixing, and visualization limits our ability to imagine what we cannot see and instead, in an act of cosmic vanity (or because it is the easy way out) we obsess instead over what we do see. However, Acha's paintings aim to create a phenomenological experience of color as opposed to mimesis—asking us to interrogate how color works.

In *landscape is a kind of feeling / todo and nada / everything y nothing (an exquisite corpse)* (fig. 13) Acha creates a painting as if a game, covering and uncovering different portions during the painting process, making space and color with her mind's eye. This creates a work that is at once connected and disparate, with clear boundaries along contrasting color schemes of grass and deep ocean, with a raindrop like effect in the center. The heat of yellow resembles sunlight curving around the earth's surface. Perhaps if we were to depict vision from the sun's point of view, we could see simultaneous layers of everything it touches as an omniscient narrator—not looking out toward a single vanishing point, but a spherical vanishing point in every direction. In *landscape is a kind of feeling* (fig. 13) sunlight loops, curves, distorts, absorbs, reflects among blue matter. Though categorized as a landscape by its title, this landscape is radial rather than linear—about the act of looking toward, rather than at.

In another experimental work, *double infinity (towards something becoming)* (fig. 14) is a bit of an anomaly among Acha's other paintings. The presence of thin precise lines of color recall diagrams, or fishing lines—human made forms across a landscape. Colors with lower saturation and value contrast make space appear flatter, like an aged photograph. Compared to the circles present in the center line, the two ellipses at the bottom of *double infinity* (fig. 14) playfully read as distorted ellipses, elongating like cartoon eyes staring intently. Perhaps this image depicts the speed of light slowed down—an undetectable moment when light first hits its subject, faster than



the flash of a shutter, not yet properly absorbing or reflecting wavelengths—still a bit confused and sorting things out. Seemingly this is an image of form becoming visible, or a shirt not yet buttoned up.

Returning to the initial impossibility of capturing the magic of the rainbow in a photograph, maybe such occurrences indicate the edge of theorems—glitches that give way to facts, much the way that the existence of afterimage reveals that our bodies are machines with glitches and imperfections. But in this glitch or distortion, we come to new truths. Are colors feelings? Are feelings facts? Maybe they are a bit of both. We are all familiar with the fact that certain colors make us feel energized, other colors make us feel calm. The way we experience color cannot be expressed through mere reproduction. This is the very work Acha’s paintings take on—understanding color as experience, and painting as an attempt to document the phenomenological landscape where color wavelengths are sonic—connected to space, time, perception, and illuminated with great feeling.

NOTES

1. Zabelina, D.L. “Are you a Synesthete?”, Psychology Today. 2011. Accessed: 02 February 2025). <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/finding-butterfly/201104/are-you-synesthete>

2. Mukamal, R. “How Humans See in Color.” American Academy of Ophthalmology. 2017. Edited by R.H. Janigian Jr. Accessed: 02 February 2025. <https://tinyurl.com/2rdz87yp>

3. Albers, J. *Interaction of Color*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013.

4. “True Colors: Isaac Newton is his own test subject.” Lapham’s Quarterly. Accessed: 02 February 2025. <http://www.laphamsquarterly.org/discovery/true-colors>

5. Getsy, D. “The Possibility of Queer Abstraction.” YouTube. Accessed: 02 February 2025. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BSvkKa3OrRM>.

6. What is the habitable zone or ‘Goldilocks zone’?. NASA science. NASA. Accessed: 02 February 2025. <https://science.nasa.gov/exoplanets/what-is-the-habitable-zone-or-goldilocks-zone/>

7. Bryanton, R. *Imagining the Tenth Dimension: A New Way of Thinking About Time and Space*. Victoria, B.C: Trafford, 2006.

8. Steyerl, H. *In Free Fall: A Thought Experiment on Vertical Perspective*, E-Flux Journal Online, Issue #24 (April 2011). Accessed: 02 February 2025, <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/24/67860/in-free-fall-a-thought-experiment-on-vertical-perspective/>

9. Steyerl, *In Free Fall*.

10. Abumrad, J. and Gleick, J. “Colors”, Radiolab. 2012. Accessed: 02 February 2025. <https://radiolab.org/podcast/211119-colors>

DANNY GREENBERG is an artist, writer, and printmaker based in Brooklyn, NY. They received their BFA from Washington University in St. Louis in Printmaking and Drawing with a minor in writing in 2011, their MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art in Print Media in 2014, and attended Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2018. Greenberg has participated in The Drawing Center Viewing Program, The Art & Law Program, The Interdisciplinary Art and Critical Theory Program, Marble House Project, Anchor Graphics, Anderson Ranch Fall Residency, and the BRIC Video Art Residency Program. Professionally, Danny is Co-founder of PACT (Personalized Art Collecting Together) with Troy Hoffman, and previously held positions at Salon 94 and David Zwirner. They have taught at CUNY and Yale and currently teach at Parsons and Pratt. Greenberg’s current artistic practice considers the intersection of Mental Health and the Arts working in printmaking, performance, and video essay. They have been involved in crisis and harm reduction services since 2017.

(opposite) Installation View of “Nothing Static” at Deanna Evans Projects



LIST OF WORKS

P. 11 <i>notas (do re(y) (a drop of golden sun) miii faaaa soo laa tiiii d(oH))</i>, 2022-2023 oil on canvas 10 x 8 inches Private collection	P. 29 <i>time keeping device or folding time (reloj de arena)</i>, 2022-2023 oil on canvas 22 x 18 inches	oil on canvas 22 x 18 inches	P. 63 <i>nuevas energías [new energies]</i>, 2021-2022 oil on canvas 22 x 26 inches Private collection, Richmond, Virginia	Fidelity Investments Corporate Art Collection, Boston, Massachusetts	Private collection, Brooklyn, New York
P. 13 <i>espacio contenido (night landscape, across time) [contained space (paisaje de noche, a través del tiempo)]</i>, 2020-2023 oil on canvas 30 x 24 inches Private collection	P. 31 <i>falling flowers (o quatro cometas, o que?) [flores que caen (or four comets, or what?)]</i>, 2023 oil on canvas 43.25 x 35.38 inches Private collection, New York	P. 51 <i>misterios del universo (las violetas de mami I) [mysteries of the universe (mom’s violets I)]</i>, 2021-2023 oil on canvas 22 x 18 inches Private collection, Richmond, Virginia	P. 65 <i>circuito (nuevas energías I) [circuit (new energies I)]</i>, 2022 pastel 15.7 x 11.8 inches Fidelity Investments Corporate Art Collection, Boston, Massachusetts	P. 67 <i>mirándola (nuevas energías IX) [looking at her (new energies IX)]</i>, 2022 pastel 15.7 x 11.8 inches Private collection, New York	P. 70 <i>zing zing zing boing (or five circles and a sun)</i>, 2023 pastel on handmade paper 22.5 x 19.5 inches Fidelity Investments Corporate Art Collection, Boston, Massachusetts
P. 15 <i>double infinity (towards something becoming)</i>, 2023 oil on canvas 22 x 18 inches Private collection, Wellesley, MA	P. 35 <i>round and round (o la memoria, lighthouses and the tides) [vueltas (or memory, faritos y mareas)]</i>, 2021-2023 oil on canvas 72 x 60 inches El Espacio 23: Collection of Jorge M. Pérez, Miami, Florida	P. 54 <i>misterios del universo (el tiempo — ti-em-po — tii-ehm-poH) [mysteries of the universe (time — ti-me — tY-m)]</i>, 2022-2023 oil and acrylic on canvas 10 x 8 inches Private collection, Connecticut	P. 66 <i>estalactitas (nuevas energías XII) [stalactites (new energies XII)]</i>, 2022 pastel 12 x 8.5 inches Private collection, Long Island, New York	P. 67 <i>estallido (nuevas energías VI) [burst (new energies VI)]</i>, 2022 pastel 15.7 x 11.8 inches Private collection, New Jersey	P. 71 <i>ciclo nocturno [night-time cycle]</i>, 2023 pastel on handmade paper 22.5 x 19.5 inches Private collection, Connecticut
P. 19 <i>landscape is a kind of feeling / todo and nada / everything y nothing (an exquisite corpse)</i>, 2021-2023 oil on canvas 22 x 18 inches Dimensional Fund Corporate Art Collection, Charlotte, North Carolina	P. 38 <i>melodias en el silencio (sonidos del paysaje) [melodies in the silence (sounds of the landscape)]</i>, 2023 oil on canvas 18 x 12 inches	P. 55 <i>misterios del universo (oh holy holy ah purity purity ehh sweetly sweetly) [mysteries of the universe (oh holy holy ah purity purity ehh sweetly sweetly)]</i>, 2022-2023 oil and acrylic on canvas 10 x 8 inches	P. 66 <i>flor para Hilma (nuevas energías II) [flower for Hilma (new energies II)]</i>, 2022 pastel 15.7 x 11.8 inches	P. 67 <i>orb (nuevas energías III) [orb (new energies III)]</i>, 2022 pastel 15.7 x 11.8 inches Private collection, New Jersey	P. 74 <i>ve-lo-ci-dad (reloj de arena) [ve-lo-ci-ty (sand clock)]</i>, 2023 pastel 15.7 x 11.8 inches Fidelity Investments Corporate Art Collection, Boston, Massachusetts
P. 20 <i>misterios del universo (stillness at the center) [mysteries of the universe (quietude en el centro)]</i>, 2022-2023 oil on canvas 10 x 8 inches Private collection, Boston, Massachusetts	P. 39 <i>poquito a poquito hacia el infinito [little by little until infinity]</i>, 2023 oil on canvas 18 x 12 inches	P. 57 <i>time lapse (contemplando la luna y el reflejo del sol) [time lapse (contemplating the moon and the reflection of the sun)]</i>, 2020-2023 oil on canvas 20 x 16 inches	P. 66 <i>hojas (nuevas energías XI) [leaves (new energies XI)]</i>, 2022 pastel 15.7 x 11.8 inches	P. 67 <i>dos olas o fuegos (nuevas energías X) [two waves or fires (new energies X)]</i>, 2022 pastel 15.7 x 11.8 inches Soho House Collection (Miami Pool House, Miami, FL), London, UK	P. 75 <i>notas (sonidos del paisaje) [notes (sounds of the landscape)]</i>, 2023 pastel 15.7 x 11.8 inches Fidelity Investments Corporate Art Collection, Boston, Massachusetts
P. 21 <i>double spiral (blooms) [espiral doble (florece)]</i>, 2020-2023 oil on canvas 60 x 48 inches HG Capital Art Collection, New York, New York	P. 41 <i>gira (des-paH-si-toH, des-pa-ci-to) [spin (sL-OH-Lee, slow-ly)]</i>, 2021-2023 oil on canvas 72 x 60 inches	P. 61 <i>misterios del universo (las violetas de mami II) [mysteries of the universe (mom’s violets II)]</i>, 2023 oil on linen 67 x 59.06 inches Dimensional Fund Corporate Art Collection, Charlotte, North Carolina	P. 66 <i>lazos (nuevas energías VIII) [knots (new energies VIII)]</i>, 2022 pastel 15.7 x 11.8 inches	P. 67 <i>Circuito (verde) [Circuit (green)]</i>, 2023 pastel 15.7 x 11.8 inches	P. 77 <i>Conchita/Plantita (or five circles and a sun) [little seashell/little plant (o cinco círculos y un sol)]</i>, 2023 oil on linen 43.25 x 35.38 inches
P. 23 <i>bouquet (borrowed flowers) [ramo (flores prestadas)]</i>, 2023 oil on canvas 22 x 18 inches	P. 45 <i>misterios del universo (loop de loop) [mysteries of the universe (loop de loop)]</i>, 2022-2023 oil and acrylic on canvas 10 x 8 inches Private collection, Miami, Florida	P. 62 <i>landscape and suns [paysaje y sols]</i>, 2021-2023 oil on canvas 22 x 18 inches Private collection, Richmond, Virginia	P. 66 <i>phenomeno (nuevas energías IV) [phenomenon (new energies IV)]</i>, 2022 pastel 15.7 x 11.8 inches Private collection	P. 68 <i>Circuito (rosado) [Circuit (pink)]</i>, 2023 pastel 15.7 x 11.8 inches	P. 78 <i>Rebotar (or four circles) II [Bounce (o quatro círculos) II]</i>, 2023 Pastel 15.7 x 11.8 inches Private collection, Connecticut
	P. 47 <i>las Arecas (o esa luz deslumbrante) [the Arecas (or that blinding light)]</i>, 2020-2023		P. 66 <i>mis flores (nuevas energías V) [my flowers (new energies V)]</i>, 2022 pastel 15.7 x 11.8 inches	P. 69 <i>Rebotar (or four circles) [Bounce (o quatro círculos)]</i>, 2023 pastel 30 x 22 inches	P. 79 <i>Rebotar (or four circles) [Bounce (o quatro círculos)]</i>, 2023 oil on linen 59.06 x 51.18 inches

PRESS RELEASE I

Beverly Acha: *In the Loop*
Emerson Dorsch

April 30 - July 9, 2023

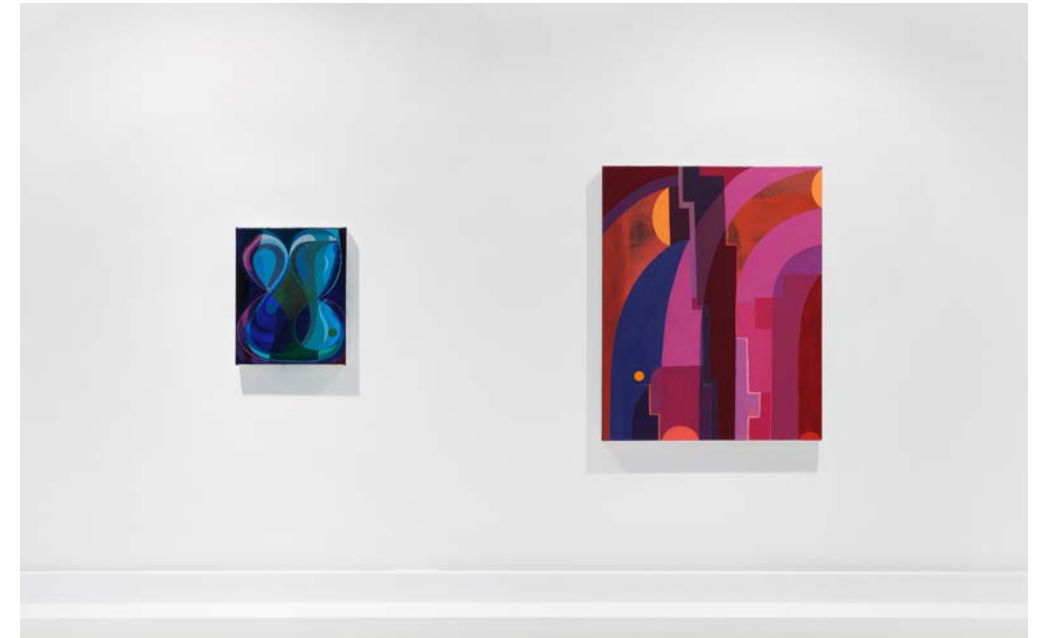
Opening Reception: Sunday, April 30, 12-4 PM

Emerson Dorsch Gallery is proud to announce *In the Loop*, an exhibition of new paintings by Beverly Acha on view from April 30th to July 9, 2023.

Acha describes her process as a succession of improvisations, intuitively creating by absorbing and translating observed architecture, light, space, and the natural elements of her surroundings into line, shape, and color. Atmospheric and spatial, her paintings are slow and methodical sublimations of her surroundings. They capture the ineffable quality of simultaneous physical and perceptual experience by responding to the ephemeral elements of air, light, and form. Nothing is predetermined when she starts painting, instead, she works in layers, developing the compositions along the way in response to previous decisions. Seemingly disparate parts and fragments of experience ultimately come together and create a harmonious whole. In Acha's own words: "Forms [in my paintings] touch one another, transforming and characterizing the spaces they inhabit. Their relationships are based in mutuality: forms respond to each other, existing as they do because of the other. My process parallels this mutuality." She continues by saying, "I work on many paintings simultaneously so that often, decisions in one painting affect the decisions in another."

A majority of the paintings included in *In the Loop* were started in late 2020 and early 2021, following Acha through various geographical moves—from Miami, Florida at the start of the pandemic, to Fishers Island, New York in early 2021, and then to New York City where the work was completed. Unlike Acha's previous paintings, which are tied to one specific landscape, these works reflect the three locations, from the flatness, flora and heat of Florida and her childhood memories to the cacophony and speed of navigating New York City. The works operate as landscape and portal, with loops, circles, and petal-like forms as recurring characters. These layers of spiraling forms distort color, create depth, and hint at the layering of several spaces onto one another.

Distinct to this new work is a playful turn inwards to memories of places, moments, and sensations. The painting *las Arecas (o esa luz deslumbrante)* for example, is a response to Acha's memory of the physical sensation of running between and hiding amid the Areca palms of her childhood yard. Similarly, as the title suggests, *misterios del universo (las violetas de mami l)* emerged from a decade of accumulated memories of her mother's potted violets.



Installation View of "In the Loop" at Emerson Dorsch

In other works such as *misterios del universo (loop de loop)* and *gira (des-paH-si-toH, des-pa-ci-to)* formal visual (and verbal) play supersedes specific memories. Looping forms and a pinwheel shape create a space for contemplation. In the former a hot entangled visual space of looping forms contains four cool tiny circles that appear to be circling around within the loops, suggesting handheld maze games, a tiny roller coaster, or a Möbius strip. While in the later, a gigantic flickering pinwheel or petal-like form seems to be either still or moving incredibly fast, flickering in the light, or translucent. These works suggest that both might be true, and are true if we collapse our sense of linear time.

Motifs related to time, landscape, and movement reappear throughout this work as hourglass forms, infinity symbols, shapes resembling musical notation, and flowers/pinwheels. Shapes also mimic each other the longer you look: a flower is a pinwheel, a circle is a sun, is an eye, is a spot on a butterfly. Circles move through the spaces of the painting like marbles, and other times function like pegs providing support, eyes, pulsating light, or periods/punctuation. These intertwined motifs become measures of time and space through their shift in scale, spatial relations, and repetition. Some paintings seem to magnify areas within other paintings.

Through a juxtaposition of small and large paintings, Acha invites the viewer to actively loop through the gallery space moving close and far, in and out—to meander, dance with the eye, look into these other worlds. Loops imply infinity; in a loop moving forward is also going back. As the title suggests, for Acha, being *In the Loop* is knowing through feeling and interest in the circularity of experience and time.

PRESS RELEASE II

Beverly Acha: *Nothing Static*
Deanna Evans Projects

September 15 - October 21, 2023
Opening Reception: Friday, September 15, 6-8 PM

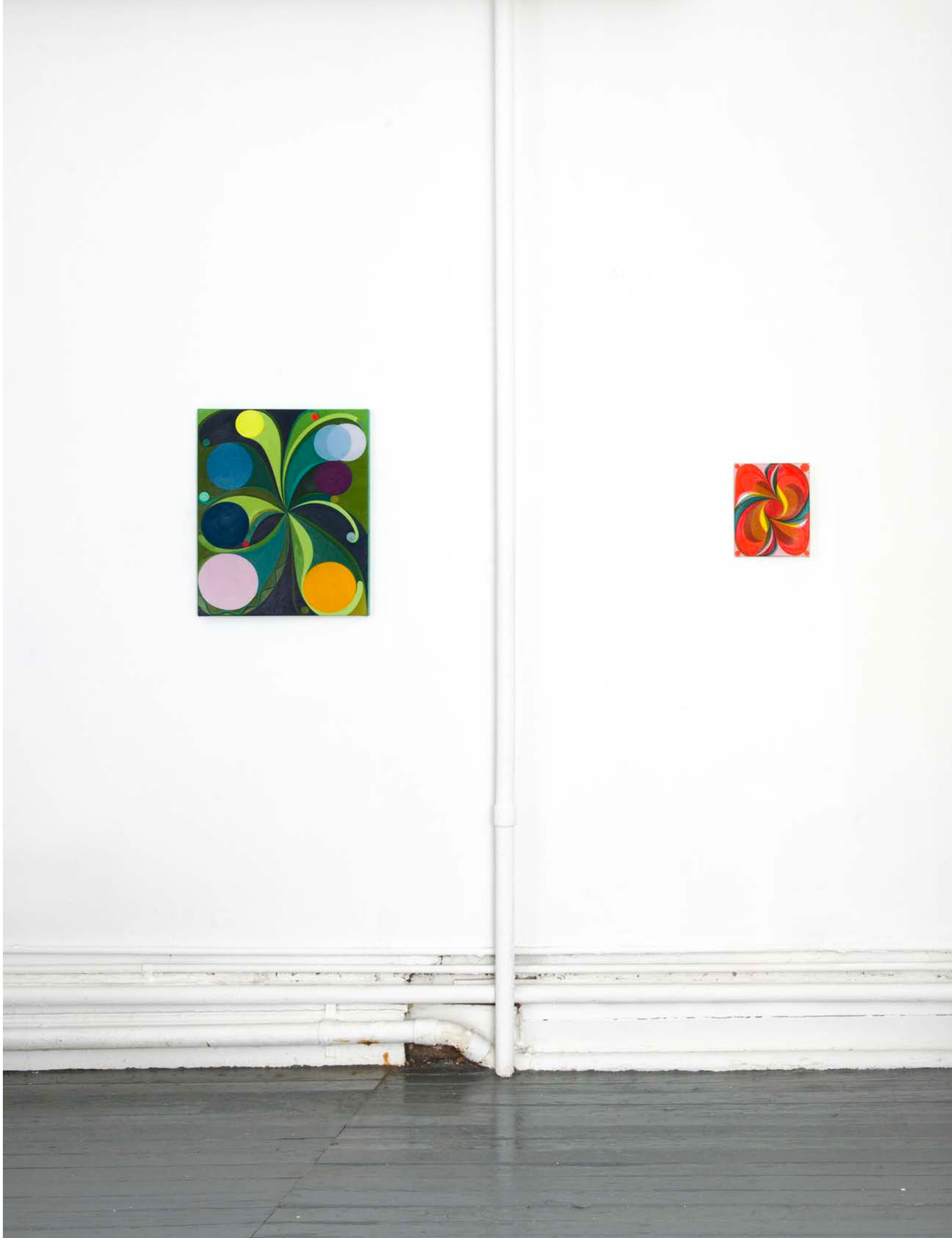
Deanna Evans Projects is pleased to present *Nothing Static*, a solo exhibition of new paintings by New York-based artist Beverly Acha. This is her first solo exhibition with the gallery, on view from September 15 to October 21, 2023.

For *Nothing Static* Acha presents a group of paintings that explore imagery related to movement and time. In this abstract work, each composition is anchored by ubiquitous symbols representing infinity, cyclicalality, and change, such as pinwheels, infinity signs, spirals, and hourglasses. Each painting seems to be alive, but temporarily paused. The stillness of the painted image invites the viewer to imagine both its before and after, which creates a sense of time and the possibility of inferred narrative.

Shapes in Acha’s work become characters in these narratives. Circles operate as nodes, suns, voids, eyes, or marbles moving through, responding to, or exerting force in the space of the paintings. Petal shapes refer to flowers reaching or pinwheels spinning. Lines demarcate space or the shape of a device that cannot be named. These gestures ground the work in the organic and natural world. Conversely, Acha’s exploration of rich, bright color and geometric shapes pushes some of the work into the realm of diagrams, machines, and the built environment.

Influenced by science fiction’s ability to employ the uncanny to build worlds that challenge our reality and the systems we accept as static, Acha’s work can be approached as a type of world building for a more internal and felt landscape. The sensation of fear, the quality of light on a hot summer day, the visceral sensorial memory of being underwater feeling the current move you, or observing a budding flower day after day, become sources for Acha’s work. By extracting shape, color, and form from observations and experiences she creates a set of visual symbols and relations for each body of work. These abstracted forms become familiar and legible as they repeat and shift from painting to painting, while an uneasiness from being unable to name what is seen remains present.

(opposite) Installation View of “Nothing Static” at Deanna Evans Projects





ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Beverly Acha (b. 1987, Miami, FL) is a visual artist working in painting, drawing, and printmaking. She holds an MFA in Painting/Printmaking from the Yale School of Art (2012), and a BA in American Studies and Studio Art, with highest honors, from Williams College (2009).

Acha has presented solo exhibitions at Deanna Evans Projects (New York, NY); Emerson Dorsch (Miami, FL); Lighthouse Works (Fishers Island, NY); Underdonk (Brooklyn, NY); and the Roswell Museum (Roswell, NM). Her recent group exhibitions include *Making Space* at the Brattleboro Museum (2025; VT); *Slow Looking* at Dinner Gallery (2024; New York, NY); *Transcendence* at JDJ Gallery (2024; New York, NY); *Trodden Path* at HESSE FLATOW (2023; Amagansett, NY); *Faraway Nearby* at North Loop (2022; Williamstown, MA); *Intertwined* at 1969 Gallery (2021; New York, NY); *XX* at Latchkey Gallery (2021; New York, NY); *Fanfare* at Fordham University's Ilkido Butler Gallery (2020; New York, NY); and *The Printer's Proof* at the Albuquerque Museum (2022; NM). Her work has been featured in publications including *New American Paintings*, *MAKE Magazine*, *ART MAZE Magazine*, *Diacritics Journal*, and the *Virginia Quarterly Review*.

Acha's work is held in numerous private collections, as well as public and institutional collections including the Miami-Dade County Art in Public Places Collection (Miami, FL); Allen Memorial Art Museum (Oberlin, OH); El Espacio 23: The Collection of Jorge M. Pérez (Miami, FL); the Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art (Roswell, NM); the Soho House Collection (London, UK); and corporate collections including Fidelity Investments, Dimensional Fund Advisors, HG Capital, and Morgan Stanley.

Her practice has been supported by residencies and fellowships from the Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program (2021), MacDowell (2019, 2025), Lighthouse Works (2017, 2021), Fountainhead (2020), Vermont Studio Center (2010, 2019), Wassaic Project (2017), Roswell Artist-in-Residence Program (2016), and Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture (2018), among others. She was the inaugural recipient of the Aon-CUE Artist Empowerment Award from CUE Art Foundation (2018) and has presented lectures on her work at institutions including El Museo del Barrio, the Harwood Museum of Art, Virginia Tech, Williams College, Vassar College, Tyler School of Art, and Maryland Institute College of Art.

In 2025, Acha completed her first public art commission: a monumental 32-foot oil painting for the Osvaldo N. Soto Miami-Dade Justice Center commissioned by Miami-Dade County Art in Public Places (Miami, FL). Acha lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

Published on the occasion of:

In the Loop

Emerson Dorsch
April 30 - July 9, 2023
5900 NW 2nd Ave
Miami, FL 33127

and

Nothing Static

Deanna Evans Projects
September 15 - October 21, 2023
373 Broadway E15
New York, NY 10013

Except where noted, all works are by
Beverly Acha.

Artwork © Beverly Acha 2025
Essay © Daniel Greenberg 2025
Essay © Valentina Jager 2025
Essay © Amanda Lechner 2024

Photo Credits:

p. 11-15, 20-21, 23, 29-31, 61-71, 74-
79, 96, 98, 110, 124: Beverly Acha
p. 4-5, 19, 35-57, 82, 88, 119:
Francesco Casale courtesy of the
Artist and Emerson Dorsch
p. 2-3, 16-17, 24-27, 32-33, 92, 112,
121: Nicki Ishmael courtesy of the
Artist and Deanna Evans Projects
p. 72-73: John Polak courtesy of the
Artist and North Loop
p. 122: Ally Caple

Special thanks to Bennington College
for supporting this publication with
Faculty Grant funding.

Printed in the United States
Fireball Printing
Philadelphia, PA

First Printing, November 2025
Edition of 150
ISBN: 979-8-218-72126-8

The artist wishes to thank the
people who made this book possible:

An overflowing, heartfelt thanks to
Valentina Jager, Danny Greenberg, and
Amanda Lechner for their friendship,
and for the deep looking, care, and
insight they've brought to my work
through their writing. I am grateful
to Deanna Evans Projects and Emerson
Dorsch for believing in my practice
and offering me space to present
the big, slow body of work I created
between 2020 and 2023. It was a gift
to present exhibitions of this work
in my hometown of Miami and in the
place I now call home. Thank you to
Cristina Rodriguez and Richard The
for their generosity and support in
the final stretch of this project.
And endless love to my sister,
always, for everything.



Beverly Acha

Nothing Static

ISBN 979-8-218-72126-8



90000>



9 798218 721268