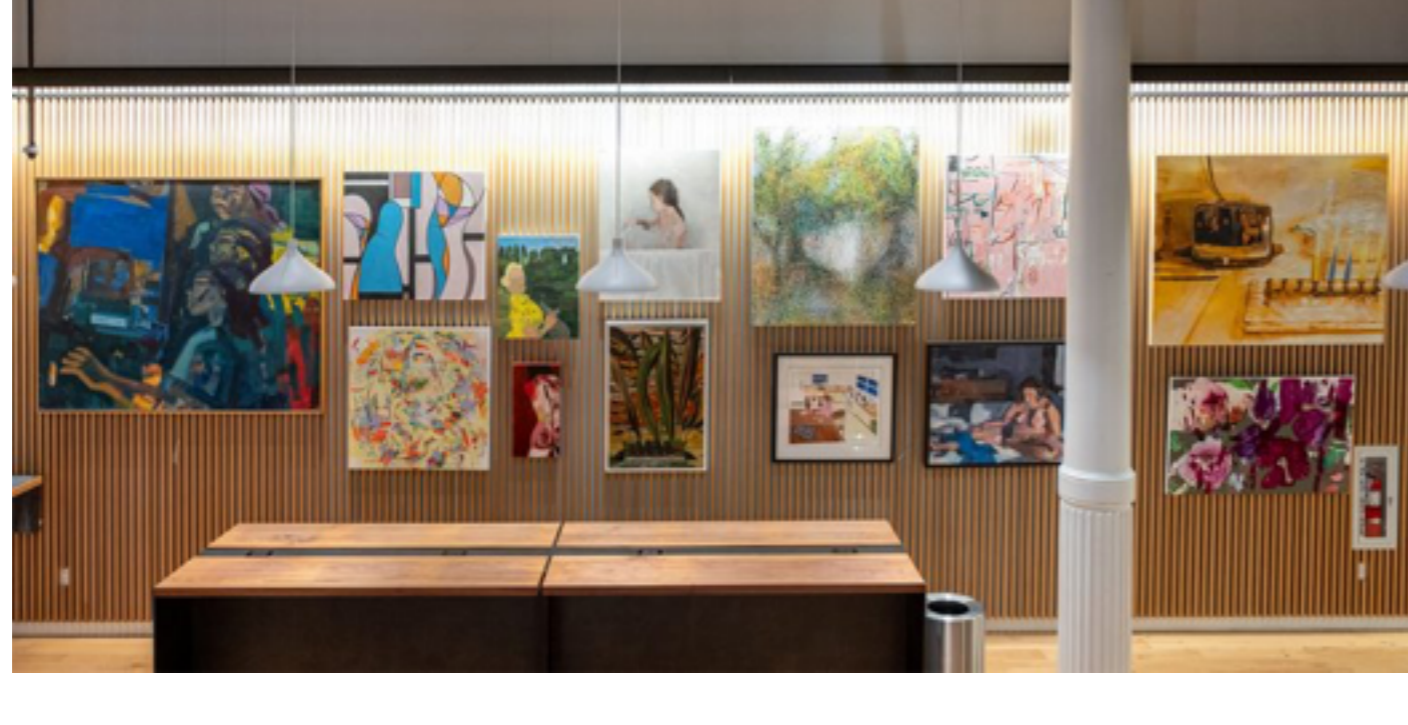


ART SPIEL

Reflections on the work of contemporary artists

FEBRUARY 8, 2021 BY SARAH CORONA

Mercedes Matter Awards Show at Margalit Startup City



Installation view

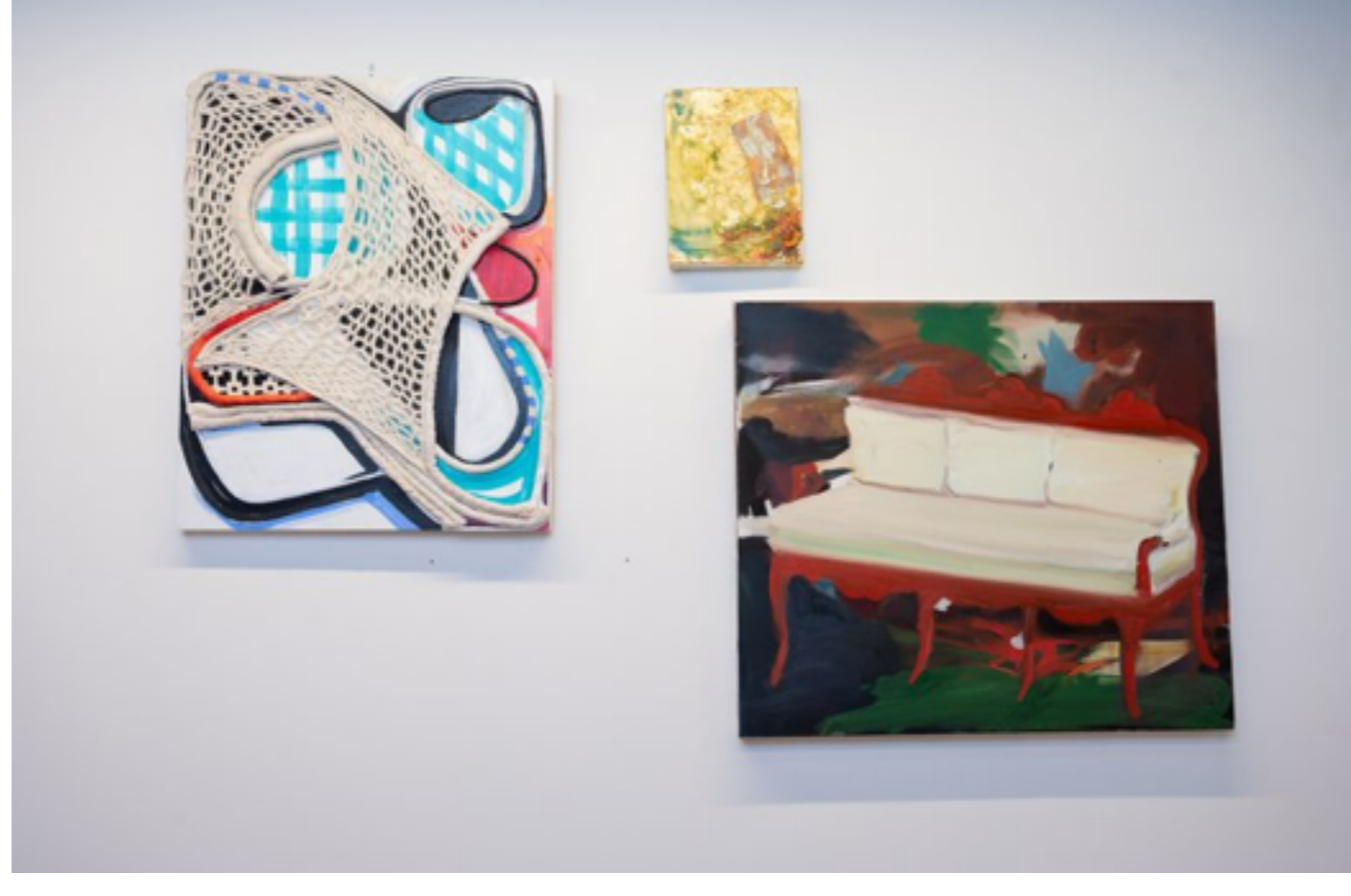
Artist, writer, and educator Mercedes Matter's legacy is a memorable one. Matter studied and worked with many notable artists including Hans Hofmann, Lee Krasner, and Willem de Kooning during the 1930s and 40s, and then founded the New York Studio School in the tumultuous year of 1964. The Studio School became one of the defining institutions of the New York art scene and delivered high profile artists from that year on. One telling fact is that Leo Castelli and company were habitual goers, and this is still the case today.

The Studio School proudly sustains Matter's legacy, and one of the ways they honor their founding dean is annual alumni exhibitions and an award in Matter's name. Even though the annual show had always been exhibited in the Studio School, this year's alumni exhibition was virtual because of the pandemic. Michael Tcheyan, the co-chair of the New York Studio School's alumni association, started the Mercedes Matter Awards, reaching out to gallerists to be jurors and select the winners. Tcheyan says that the Alumni Association's main goal is "to try and bring the work of our alumni to the attention of high quality galleries in order to form a professional relationship."

This year, the jury members were Berry Campbell Gallery's Christine Berry, Hollis Taggart Gallery's Paul Efstathiou, Miles McEnery Gallery's Miles McEnery, Public Swim Gallery's Catherine Bernath and Madeleine Mermall, and Zürcher Gallery's Gwénolette Zürcher. The works of the award winners are currently on view at the lobby of Margalit Startup City, a space offered generously by Jerusalem Venture Partners. The exhibition gathers 32 artworks by 32 artists, all NYSS alumni. The criteria decisive for all the jury members is the defining quality of the technique, mastery, and composition, along with their artistic personality, directly inherited from the New York Studio School's mission to educate and form artists of extreme excellence.

The 32 artists offer an interesting, broad selection from emerging artists, such as the promising Laura Weil, to established ones like Michael Meehan. Through the variety of artists and media, one theme seems to emerge: Many works address the domestic space-- itself, domestic practices such as knitting, or what can be observed from within, like views from the window. The overall atmosphere is very intimate and warm. In a corporate building founded by a venture capital firm, the welcoming feeling of these images present an interesting, complementary contrast to its surroundings and the companies' identities.

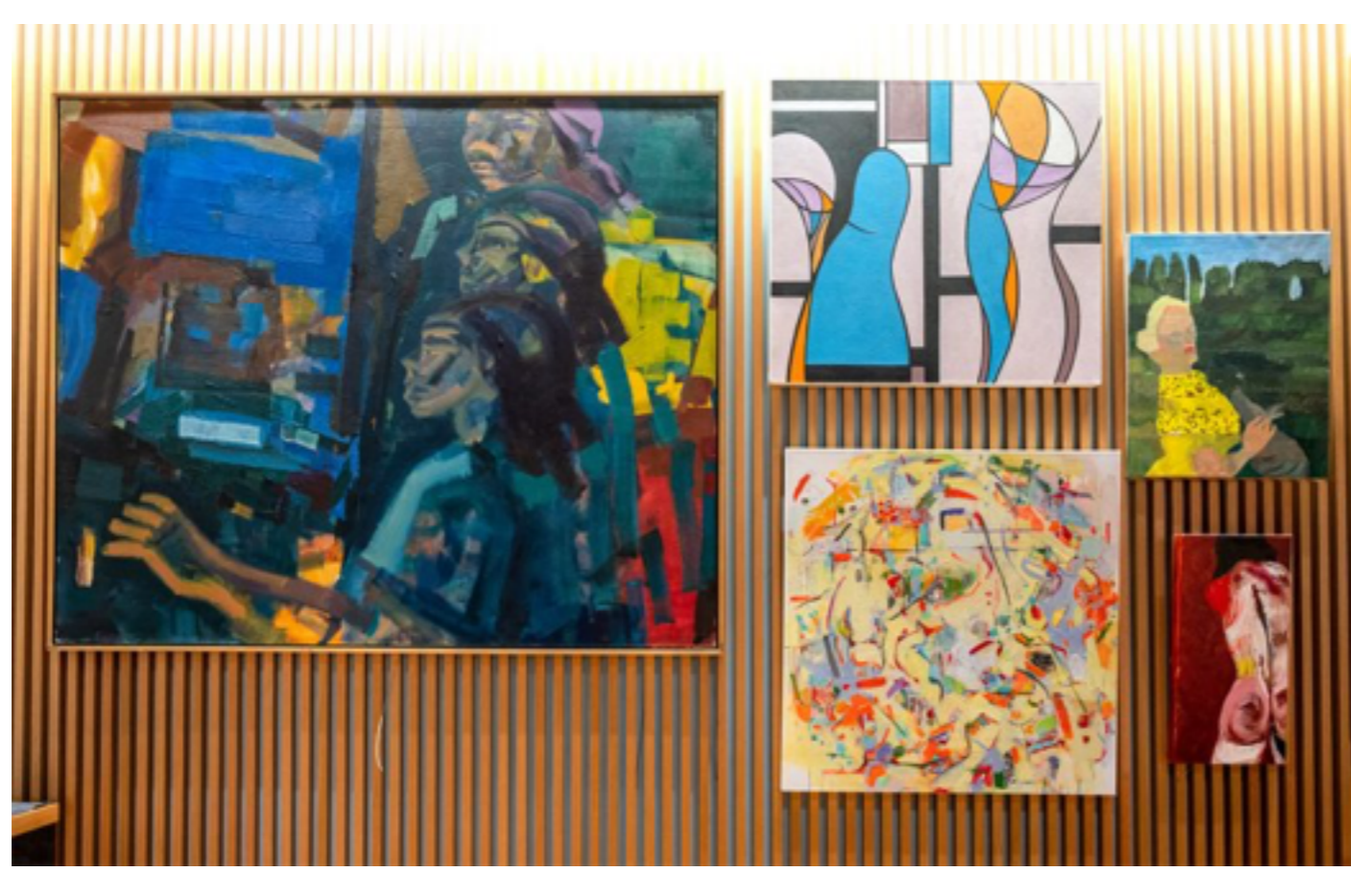
Susan Mastrangelo's sculptural canvas *Sufficient Reduction* (2020), for example, made with knitted areas, fillers, and more traditional acrylic paint, are evocative of a tradition often related to a soothing aspect rather than a functional one. It is also exemplative for an innovative approach to traditional painting, often associated with the New York Studio School. Other stunning, but not only, examples are David Rich's *The Sideways Window* (2000), *Whereabout* (2019) by Dena Sturm, and *Voyeurs* (2019) by Amanda Church. Diverse and inclusive, the exhibition embraces many mediums, including a stop-motion video by Case Jernigan. The show represents the broad artistic range of the New York Studio School perfectly, and gathers the selections of different gallerists seamlessly. It's a real exhibition in an alternative space.



Susan Mastrangelo, Barbara Laube, Jeannie Weissglass



Becky Yazdan, Debbie Margalit



David Rich, Amanda Church, Laura Weil, Gina Werfel, Yael Dresdner

This exhibition proves again how public art, accessible to everyone, directly enhances and transforms an environment, and helps express the community's values. Art in public office spaces is no different, allowing a transitional lobby or office to instantly turn into an art space. In addition, art in the workplace encourages and promotes social interactions, stimulates emotional responses, and fosters personal relationships. It also boosts creativity and production: A 2017 research shows that "creativity induced through art may transcend domains, and transfer to workplace environments through (heightening employees') inspiration."

Art in daily life is irreplaceable, and even more so now: The global pandemic made us realize the steadying effect of art. Remember all the times we found comfort in movies and TV series, fell asleep to music, and looked at art on our walls and screens to be inspired? Works of art remind us of our competence and capacity to create. The Mercedes Matter Awards Show, turning 122 Grand Street to a specially curated gallery of the Studio School, is a successful example of a much needed art project in the public realm and sheds light on an evolving art industry: where art is not bound to the white cube anymore.



Edmond Praybe, Claudia Doring-Baez, Charity Baker

All photos by photographer Nir Arieli

MERCEDES MATTER AWARDS 2020 Alumni Exhibition Nov. 12, 2020 – Feb 24, 2021

122 Grand Street, New York, NY The exhibition is free to the public and accessible all weekdays 9 to 5 PM

Artists: Amanda Church, Barbara Laube, Becky Yazdan, Case Jernigan, Charity Baker, Claudia Doring-Baez, David Rich, Debbie Margalit, Dena Sturm, Edmond Praybe, Elisabeth Condon, Elizabeth Hazan, Garry Nichols, Gina Werfel, Howard Kalish, Katie Ruiz, Laura Karetzky, Laura Weil, Marie-Claude Giguère, Michael Meehan, Michael Monsky, Ro Lohin, Sarah King, Stephanie Franks, Susan English, Susan Mastrangelo, Suzanna Schlemm, Yael Dresdner

Sarah Corona is an Independent Art Professional based in New York. One of her main interests is to bring art into the public realm and to discover how technology affects art and culture and how societal issues are reflected through art. She is the founder of [SARAHCROWN Art Consulting](#), founder of the Art In Lobbies program, and specializes in private sales and business strategies in the arts. She co-founded ROOMSERVICE Gallery (2015-2017) in Williamsburg NY, and has curated extensive community-focused and public art exhibitions/festivals in the Bronx and Queens, has curated at and for international art galleries, institutions, and unconventional spaces, including initiating several pop-up galleries in vacant spaces in Downtown, New York. Sarah Corona wrote her doctoral thesis about Chinese Contemporary Art (Alma Mater Bologna / Paris 8, Paris) after completing a MA in Communication and Fine Arts in Bologna, Italy. In 2014, she successfully completed a professional program in Art and Business at NYU New York.

