

vis-à-vis

EMILY BERGER & CLAIRE SEIDL



Emily Berger, *Untitled* (detail), 2013, oil on wood panel, 24 x 20"

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EMILY BERGER & CLAIRE SEIDL

MARCH 25 - APRIL 19, 2014

THE
PAINTING
CENTER

547 WEST 27TH STREET
SUITE 500, NY, NY 10001
WWW.THEPAINTINGCENTER.ORG
HOURS: TUES - SAT, 11 - 6 PM
(212) 343-1060



Claire Seidl *If It's All the Same to You*, 2014, oil on linen, 54 x 42"

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The studio visit is both a convention and a tribal rite in the art world; it gives access to an authenticity and rawness lacking in an exhibition. The studio is the site of the conditions and components of making - intention, transition, potential. The visitor enters in the lull between start and conclusion, venturing into the territory of critique and analysis.

This exhibition is a consequence of 30 years of studio visits between Claire Seidl and Emily Berger. During this time, Berger and Seidl have seen each other's work in various states: liminal, tentative, transitional and completed. They share a vocabulary; accept one another's differences; the visits facilitate and influence their work. Although both are abstractionists and differences in outcome are pronounced, they complement rather than oppose one another. In this exhibition, each work yields something that creates a larger whole. Both painters have created a body of work that is conceptually and formally rich. Both maximize all types of ambiguity - spatial, structural and inferential. They consistently reconsider and revise as they work; the changes are at the heart of their respective processes.

Seidl is constantly responsive to what's on the canvas before her. Her work reiterates her process, claiming every touch and gesture. For her, painting involves an on-going experimentation with the medium and its possibilities. As her work is so process-driven, it's in constant flux up to the moment it finds resolution. Each painting is the consequence of the fluidity and mutability of paint, color relationships and action within a given territory. She cultivates an allusive image, one constructed from a complex, nuanced and layered space.

Berger's work represents the interplay of additive and subtractive processes with layers of paint that are applied in thin or condensed strips. Her use of pattern and repetition creates a subtle, reductive mix of organic and gestural elements. Comprised of dense and saturated paint, her wavering, sensual, horizontal bands are shadowed by changes and readjustments. Her work is loosely improvisational, seemingly caught in a transitional state; just after or before coming into being. The drama of her work lies in the spaces between bands; these are charged with an electrified presence that expands her language of light and imprecise geometry. The vast potential of abstraction, its panoply of intention and outcome, is on display in this exhibition.

Seidl and Berger's work is freighted with psychological and philosophical associations as well as the immense possibilities of light, color and scale. Neither makes decorative work; their paintings are tough-minded and muscular. Berger's expanding and contracting bars of color and Seidl's agitated or meditative fields present an expansive architecture of form and concept. Their work is the record of a commitment to the physicality of paint and its transformative promise.

Kathleen Whitney
2014

Kathleen Whitney, an LA-based writer and artist, is the author of numerous catalogs and is a regular contributor to several national and international publications.



Emily Berger *Untitled*, 2013, oil on wood panel, 22 x 20"



Claire Seidl *The Likes of Me*, 2013, oil on linen, 54 x 42"



Emily Berger *Untitled*, 2013, oil on wood panel, 22 x 20"



Emily Berger *Untitled*, 2014 oil on wood panel, 24 x 20"



Claire Seidl *Likely Story*, 2014, oil on linen, 31 x 30"



Claire Seidl *On that Note*, 2014, oil on linen, 24 x 22.5"



Emily Berger *Untitled*, 2013, oil on wood panel, 26 x 22"



Emily Berger *Untitled*, 2013, oil on linen, 26 x 21.5"



Claire Seidl *As I Live and Breathe*, 2013, oil on linen, 36 x 30"



Claire Seidl *In a Heartbeat*, 2013, oil on linen, 20 x 14"



Emily Berger *Untitled*, 2013, oil on wood panel, 26 x 22"

Emily Berger (www.emilyberger.net) lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. She has exhibited nationally and internationally in galleries, universities and museums, including The Museum of Modern Art in Bogota, the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, the Brattleboro Museum and Art Center in Brattleboro, Vermont, and the National Academy of Art in New York which awarded her the John Hultberg Memorial Prize for Painting. Her work has been featured in many New York City gallery exhibits, and been favorably reviewed in several online publications. She is included in the American Abstract Artists 75 Anniversary Print Portfolio Exhibition, currently traveling to university galleries around the country. Berger received a BA from Brown University, an MFA in painting from Columbia University and attended the Skowhegan School in Maine as well as several art residencies. Her work is included in many private and public collections.

Claire Seidl (www.claireseidl.com) is best known as an abstract painter; she has also been making and showing photographs for the last fifteen years. She exhibits her work nationally, and in Europe and Asia; and has had 30 one-person shows. Her work has been shown at the Aldrich Museum, the Portland Museum of Art, the University of Maine Museum of Art, the McNay Art Museum, the Noyes Museum and the Moscow Museum of Modern Art. Her work is included in museum, university and corporate collections; and has been consistently well-reviewed in publications such as *Art in America*, *Art News*, *The New York Times*, *Arts Magazine*, *The New York Observer*, *The Portland Press Herald*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *New Art Examiner*, and *Partisan Review*. Recent exhibitions have included *What Was, Is* (with sculptor Duncan Hewitt) at the Center for Maine Contemporary Art in Rockport, Maine in 2013; and a survey of paintings from 1988 to 2012 at Icon Contemporary Art in Brunswick, Maine. Seidl is currently represented by Lesley Heller Workspace in New York.



Claire Seidl *Merrily Merrily* (detail), 2014, oil on linen, 17 x 12"

