

Press Release  
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CALLAN CONTEMPORARY  
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Doyle Gertjejansen

New Paintings

Opening Reception: Saturday, August 5th, 6 - 9 PM

Exhibition Dates: August 3rd through September 23rd, 2023



Doyle Gertjejansen's invigorating abstractions at Callan Contemporary marry aesthetic complexity, luxuriant textures, and an underlying core of aesthetic authenticity. In a suite of conceptually sophisticated mixed-media paintings on canvas, he juxtaposes delicate washes and sensual surfaces in an array of gestures and recurring motifs, which float, jostle, and dialogue with one another in a dimension un beholden to gravity. Combining acrylics, charcoal, pastels, and liquid graphite in a virtuosic *mélange*, he references art history, theory, science, and philosophy, while imbuing every brushstroke with a disarming specificity of expression. It is this confluence of intention and spontaneity, painstakingly rendered shapes and unmannered mark-making, that positions these works as a synthesis of seeming contradictions. Within each piece, an almost alchemical dynamic exists between the unified composition and its component parts, which relate in ways that recall organic processes. "Each element of the painting has a sense of importance to it," he explains, "so it stands on its own without relying on the larger structure."

After receiving his M.F.A. from the University of Minnesota, Gertjeansen commenced a forty-year teaching career at the University of New Orleans, parallel to his practice as a studio artist. The recipient of awards and honors including a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, he has exhibited internationally and is included in prestigious institutional, corporate, and private collections, among them the New Orleans Museum of Art, Ogden Museum of Southern Art, University Museum/Southern Illinois University, Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation, and McGraw Hill Publishing.

In the Callan Contemporary exhibition, many of the paintings' titles, such as Green Birds Escaping and Blood Moon, allude to nature, which might seem surprising for a committed postmodern abstractionist. In fact, Gertjeansen finds enjoyment and inspiration in the outdoors, traveling nearly every weekend from New Orleans to his country home in the Mississippi Sand Hills. Keen observers of his artworks will note passages in which the suggestion of natural references infiltrates the abstract picture plane. "I don't want to paint that out," he says. "I want it to be part of the universe of these paintings." Such passages heighten an increasingly primal quality informing the works in recent years, as they have begun to suggest the unstudied directness of pictographs and the art of prehistory. Their seamless counterbalancing of refinement and archaicism activates the viewer's imagination, opens the possibility of narrative, and suggests "forms and forces in the natural world that link to myth and mystery."

- Richard Speer