

DAVID KORDANSKY GALLERY

David Kordansky Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new paintings by Lesley Vance, [A Zebra Races Counterclockwise](#). The show, which opens September 12 and will be on view through October 24, 2020, takes place across two of the gallery's exhibition spaces and features paintings that are Vance's largest to date. David Kordansky Gallery is currently open by appointment. Virtual visits are available.

Lesley Vance has honed an unmistakable visual language in which abstraction articulates its connections to realities both tangible and ephemeral. She has achieved this in numerous ways, emphasizing relationships between light and shadow, exploring different perceptions of space, and reckoning with the materiality of color. Her new exhibition's title is taken from a line in Frank O'Hara's [Poetry](#), a poem that teases out connections between quickness, surprise, and desire, and that enacts, through its own slippery syntax, the ways in which the mind attempts to impart fixity to changing situations: "A zebra races counterclockwise. / All this I desire. To / deepen you by my quickness / and delight as if you were logical and proven..."

Several of Vance's most recent paintings are over six feet tall and therefore enter into dialogue with the body in wholly new ways. Like her works of the last few years, the underlying architecture of these paintings is based in freely flowing expressive gestures that she elaborates over time, transforming them into networks of lines, textures, and intercut volumes. Because of their increased scale, these marks communicate the sweep of an entire arm. Passages appear to speed up or slow down with newfound force. Furthermore, the vivid intensity of her palette creates fully immersive, intensely optical viewing experiences in which foregrounds and backgrounds constantly jostle for primacy. For all their formal power, though, these paintings are sensitive documents that record the action of intelligence and imagination as they intersect with sensate reality.

This reality includes the qualities of paint itself, especially at a larger scale. In Vance's case, this means that color can convincingly communicate illusions of weight and depth, becoming the focus of the viewer's awareness. The eye moves back and forth between two opposing modes of seeing: just as it begins to lose itself within surreal constructions of shapes, lines, and planes, it is confronted with the fact of the materials Vance uses to create them. The pristine nature of her surfaces only gain in seductiveness and complexity when seen in person, and they are revealed to be decidedly handmade, tactile things made from the movements of the artist's brush, arm, and hand.

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Working alone and without assistants, Vance establishes levels of intimacy and close engagement that are immediately palpable regardless of the size of the canvas. In several of the works on view, layers of brushy transparency carry with them the energy of expressionist gestures, thereby disrupting the otherwise intact edges that distinguish one distinct shape or space from another so that the fluidity of paint assumes center stage. The ribbon-like forms that swerve across Vance's canvases vary in density and composition, picking up or shedding hues as they go, momentarily pausing before slipping back into the thickets of color and luminosity from which they emerge.

Suffused with the feel of the physical world, Vance's paintings are full of shifting moods and paradoxes that deepen in complexity the longer they are viewed. Attuned to ever-finer nuances of perception and physical presence, her work becomes both stranger and more naturalistic as it continues to unfurl.

Lesley Vance (b. 1977, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; lives and works in Los Angeles) has been the subject of exhibitions at the FLAG Art Foundation, New York (2012); Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, Maine (2012); and The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens, San Marino, California (2012, with Ricky Swallow). Recent group exhibitions include Aftereffect: Georgia O'Keeffe and Contemporary Painting, Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver (2018); The Campaign for Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2016); Don't Shoot the Painter. Paintings from UBS Art Collection, Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Milan (2015); Variations: Conversations in and Around Abstract Painting, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2014); and Painter Painter, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2013). Her paintings are in the public collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Dallas Museum of Art; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, among many others. A monograph documenting the last seven years of her work was recently published by Gregory R. Miller & Co