

Press release

Marianna Utinen | *Free*

June 4th – July 30th 2016

Opening: Friday, June 3rd, 2016, 6–9 pm

carlier | gebauer is pleased to announce *Free*, a solo exhibition of new paintings by the Finnish artist Marianna Utinen. This will be her third solo exhibition with the gallery. Over the years, the artist has developed a signature technique that fuses thick layers of acrylic paint to create a skin-like structure that she drapes across the surface of a traditional canvas. While her previous work was distinguished by sweeping folds, a bold palette, and an opulent aesthetic, the paintings in the current exhibition strike a quieter, more contemplative tone.

Throughout her practice, Utinen's restless experimentation underscores how painting can be a vehicle for new thinking and breaking with old habits. The new works explore how the medium of painting can convey that which is invisible and immaterial. Shimmering and translucent, these dramatically reduced compositions are the most recent examples of the ethereal visual language that the artist has been developing over the course of a year. A vital instability prevails in Utinen's new works. The pearlescent hues of each canvas vary dramatically depending on where one stands in relation to them. What at first glance appears like a soft cream color pans to dusty rose as you walk past. While Utinen has long considered painting to be a non-expressive physical accumulation of her actions, this new body of work forms the most striking example of the artist's treatment of painting as a time-based medium, which in this case extends not only to the accumulation of time as represented in the artist's mark-making, but the time of perception as well. In other words: the time of the viewer.

The dynamic surfaces of these canvases materially attest to the variability of experience and individual nature of perception. Although Utinen does not approach painting as an expressive act, through the instability of the materials this new body of work becomes quite personal. The ever-changing celestial color palette nods towards a spiritual bent in the work, yet Utinen hasn't lost her sense of humor despite such ethereal associations. The artist's material engagement with questions of the feminine, kitsch, sensuality and sexuality seethe just beneath the plastic surfaces, like another sparkling thing. These serene works oscillate between abundance and restraint, redirecting her signature dramatic excess into strategic eruptive flourishes.

Utinen (b. 1961, Pieksämäki) lives and works in Berlin. Her paintings have been included in numerous public collections such as Moderna Museet (Stockholm, Sweden), Louisiana Museum (Denmark), the Malmö Art Museum (Sweden), Seoul Museum (South Korea), The National Museum of Contemporary Art (Norway), Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, Finland and the Helsinki City Art Museum (Finland). Her work was shown at the Louisiana Museum (Denmark), Moderna Museet (Malmö, Sweden), the Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art in (Helsinki), the Ludwig Museum (Koblenz), Moderna Museet (Stockholm), and the Venice Biennale (1997).