

Press release

Jessica Rankin | *There and Not There*

16 March – 18 April, 2019

Opening: Friday, 15 March 2019, 6-9pm

carlier | gebauer is pleased to present a solo exhibition with the Australian artist Jessica Rankin. *There and Not There* will be the artist's fifth exhibition with the gallery.

An artist and poet in equal measure, Rankin is perhaps best known for her expansive embroideries, collages, and watercolors that combine celestial maps and landscapes with fragments of original and found writings. The works in *There and Not There* mark a radical shift in the artist's materials and approach. While earlier works were primarily rendered in silvery and lavender monotypes, and embroidery thread was used to create slippages between landscape and text, the new works delve much more deeply into the language of painting.

Rankin has described their making as a state of "free fall." Emerging from an intuitive and unmediated process, these exuberant works are marked by vibrant floating color fields. Rankin uses an expanded range of materials to paint with in this series. What first appears as an amorphous patch of color reveals itself as embroidery floss upon closer inspection. A dynamic interplay of materials ensues, in which embroidery often continues, complicates, or interrupts the painted gesture—at times even imitating the quality and thickness of a brush-stroke. Similarly, in works like *Thread Suns* undulating swathes of fabric extend the composition of the painting into three dimensions. Indeed, there is something emphatically object-like about many of these works, particularly in how they incorporate language.

Fragments of Rankin's own writing, as well as the work of other poets and Babylonian creation myths, line the sides of the canvas. Most of the paintings spill over onto the sides of their stretchers, which are the most heavily worked parts of the painting—seamlessly continuing the color of the painted surface in embroidery floss. Rankin's layered veils of color at times recall the "abstract climates" of Helen Frankenthaler, yet the joyousness that her paintings exude nonetheless emerge within a particularly dark socio-political context in the United States where the artist is based. Within this climate, a stance of intimacy and tenderness is both an act and space of resistance.

The title for the exhibition is inspired by the Romanian poet Paul Celan. A Holocaust survivor who continued to write in his native German, Celan's abstract, highly idiosyncratic style pushed the limits of language: breaking open words, shattering grammatical syntax, and often writing his poems with very few words. Rankin's latest body of work emerges from a comparable impulse. Both "there" and "not" there, it thrives in interstitial spaces: between media, between spaces—being in thrall to one's own time, while simultaneously creating other means of living, creating, seeing, and doing.

Jessica Rankin (b.1971, Sydney) lives and works in New York. Selected solo exhibitions include Contemporary Forward Rochdale Art Gallery, Rochdale; Salon 94, New York (2014); SCAD, Atlanta (2013); PS1 Contemporary Arts Center, New York (2006); and Franklin Artworks, Minneapolis (2005). In spring 2016, Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens presented the two person exhibition Earthfold: Julie Mehretu/ Jessica Rankin. Rankin has participated in numerous group exhibitions in the US, Europe and Australia.