

**Press release**

**Jessica Rankin | *The Weight of Light***

14.03.–20.06.2026

Opening: Saturday, 14 March, 2026, 4 – 9 pm

carlier | gebauer, Berlin, is pleased to announce the solo exhibition *The Weight of Light* by New York-based painter Jessica Rankin, presenting seven new works.

Known for her distinctive application of yarn and paint on canvas, Rankin renounces in her work notions of mastery over a medium in favour of an intuitive, playful approach, where paint behaves like thread and thread like paint. Veering between the disciplines, Rankin creates a visual back and forth between paint and thread, between painting and writing. Neither having trained as a painter nor embroider, and thus relinquishing mastery as a form of command over the medium, Rankin gains a freedom in her process. Reflection upon the work is part of its creation or follows afterwards, Rankin herself refers to her process “as making in a state of trepidation”.

The compositions spill over the edge of the canvas, onto which Rankin stitches text fragments. These references are folded away, inviting the viewer to step closer and around the canvas, positioning them in relation to the work. These text fragments, as well as the titles of her large-scale paintings often quote poems from Rankin’s personal canon, thus unravelling a net of deeply intimate and personal references. These references in turn pose questions about art making and art history, lineage and visibility rendered through the lens of poetry, unfolded across a canvas. Rankin considers herself as an “earnest artist”, who does not approach her work with an ironic distance, but rather a certain scepticism.

With the poet Ada Limón, whose poem *Fifteen Ball of Feathers* Rankin quotes in the paintings *Watery Extension of Time (AL)* and *Small Susurrations (AL)* the artist shares her exploration of the excitement and passion of being human, living life day by day. Like ripples of water, like powerful rays of sun, like its reverberations in the retina, these concentrating compositions convey the wonder before the multitude of human experiences, as well as before nature and the natural environment. In her work, Limón, touches upon topics of her heritage, which Rankin continues throughout the exhibition in a twofold way. *Loop up the Sky Swooping (JR)* quotes *Mainland Eyes*, a poem by the artist’s mother Jennifer Rankin, an acknowledged poet herself. About this poem, Martin Duwell writes in 2026: “The impression given is that a scene is being painted and some humans are located within it, doing the usual uninteresting things that humans do. The poet’s real interest is in the sky and its inhabitants, the birds, and in this sense *Mainland Eyes* is an introduction to one of Rankin’s continuing interests. There are birds in an extraordinary number of her poems, birds which, unlike bees and other insects, show no great interest in the earth”. In *Her Gathered Beams (M)* Rankin extracted this fragment from John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, with which Milton aimed to achieve writing the first biblical epic in English, focusing on the so-called elevated subjects of love and heroism. Instead of telling a tale of a heroic subject, Rankin introduces a radiant heroine to this story, who instead of conquering gathers. One can think here along the lines of Ursula K. Le Guin’s *Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*. Finally, with *Whistle Anciently (AN)*, taken from the poem *For the Ride* Rankin reflects alongside Alice Notley on the solitary conditions of art making, filling the linen canvas with ribbon like shapes, flowing alongside each other, while rarely intertwining or overlapping.

**Jessica Rankin** (b.1971, Sydney) lives and works in New York. Selected solo and duo exhibitions include White Cube, Hong Kong, SAR China (2024); Touchstones Rochdale, UK (2017); Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium (2016) with Julie Mehretu; Salon 94, New York (2014); Savannah College of Art and Design, Atlanta (2013); The Project, New York (2009); MoMA PS1, New York (2006); and Franklin Artworks, Minneapolis (2005). Group exhibitions include Palazzo Grassi, Venice, Italy (2024); The Uptown Triennial, New York (2017); Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, UK (2015); Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Wolfsburg, Germany (2013); Fie Myles, New York (2011); Jenkins Johnson Gallery, San Francisco (2011); The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (2006); The Project, Los Angeles (2005); and Artist's Space, New York (2003).