

SUZANNE MCCLELLAND

MUTE

On View January 22 – April 18, 2021 | 100 South Spring St. Aspen, CO

Marianne Boesky Gallery is delighted to present a selection of recent paintings from Suzanne McClelland's MUTE series, which will be on view on the first floor of our Aspen location from January 22 to April 18.

Systems of communication and exchange are at the center of Suzanne McClelland's practice. The artist explores the inherent interdependence between abstraction and representation as it appears in painting and the printed, written and spoken word. In large-scale canvases as well as collaborative books and prints, McClelland has opened new avenues for painting, investigating its linguistic and acoustic dimensions and reflecting our broader cultural and political concerns. Built from visual as well as auditory observations of this world, her works underscore the ways in which language itself is gendered and politicized by its context and therefore naturally infused with social commentary.

McClelland's MUTE paintings disassemble language. The series comprises 26 paintings, one for each letter of the Latin alphabet. Rather than representing the letters as we see them, each painting in its own way mutes the elemental components of language, so much so that these letters dissolve or melt into the unutterable. McClelland liberates language from an existential bind: severing symbols from their function, she prevents their vocalization and articulation. They exist now as solitary devices, allowing them to return to their potentiality. The MUTE series deconstructs symbols and structures into abstractions that manifest an alternate alphabet, which in turn demands a new context to acquire legible meaning. The result is an expression of language that cannot be spoken or read, yet demands to be seen, felt, and understood as present.

In the process of painting this work, McClelland engages with notions of control and doubt. The artist seizes on intuition as well as chance as powerful means of responding to systems of describing and naming, quantifying and predicting, categorizing and identifying. While their verticality is suggestive of portraiture, the abstracted compositions are formed by viscous spills: records of the pouring, staining, and hardening of pigments. The surfaces of these paintings – simultaneously sparkly, dusty, and inky – are encrusted with frozen sprays of glitter, charcoal, and dry pigments.

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Suzanne McClelland (b. Jacksonville, FL) has exhibited extensively in the United States and abroad since the early 1990s. The artist has had solo presentations at the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art (Philip Morris), the Fralin Museum of Art at the University of Virginia, and the Orlando Museum of Art, among others. McClelland participated in the 1993 and 2014 Whitney Biennials and her work has been presented in group exhibitions, such as those at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Wexner Center for the Arts, and the New Museum of Contemporary Art. The artist has been the recipient of numerous awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, Anonymous Was A Woman Award, and a Nancy Graves Foundation Grant; and she has participated in international residencies,

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including most recently the Troedsson Villa Residency in Nikko, Japan and the Skowhegan School. Her work is held in numerous public collections including that of the Brooklyn Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Walker Art Center, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, among others. The artist will have her first solo exhibition with Marianne Boesky Gallery in 2021. McClelland lives and works between New York and the tip of Long Island, NY.

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