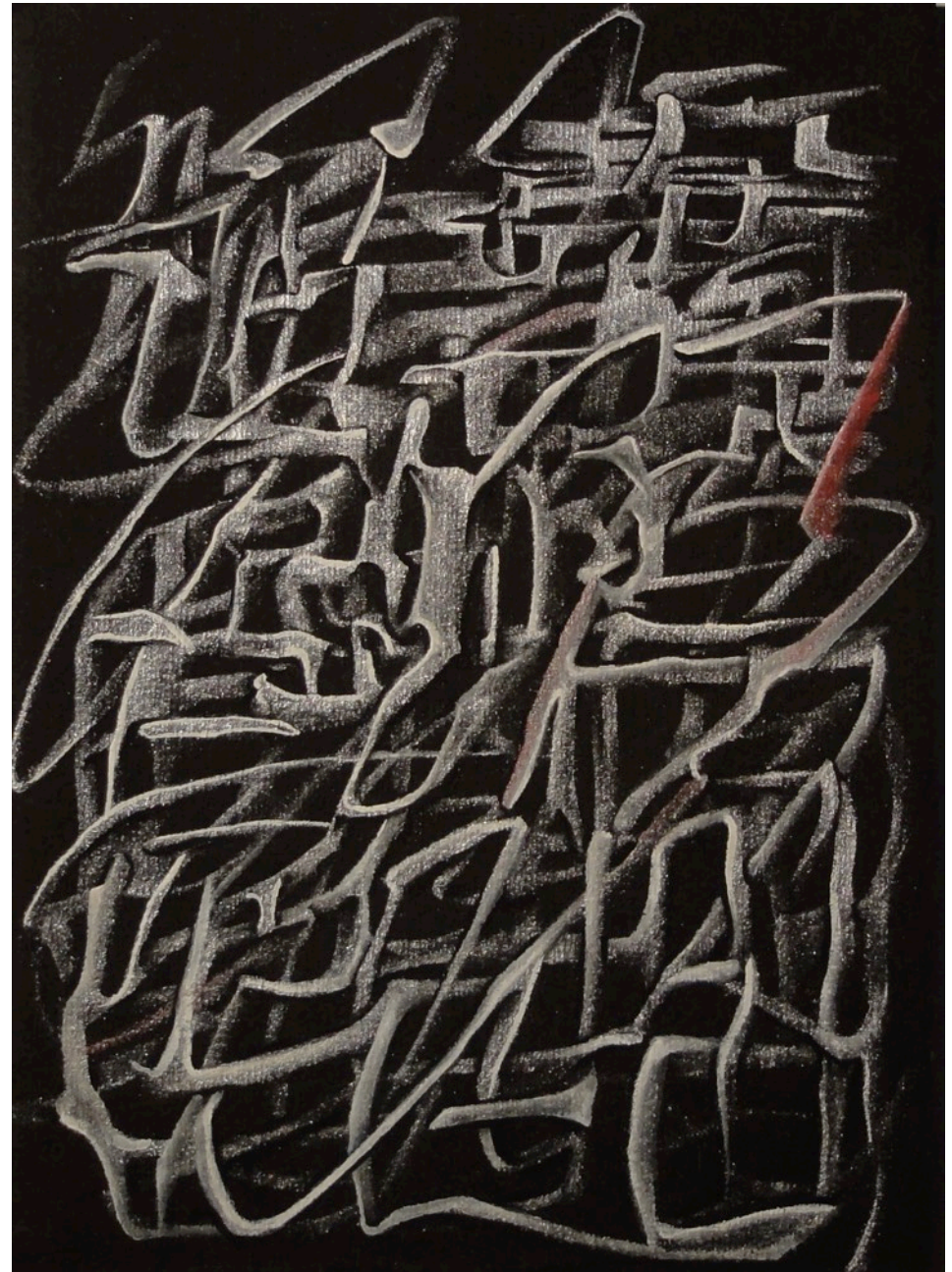




Study for Painting (Grey Ink), 2017
 Ink and graphite on paper
 11 x 8 inches



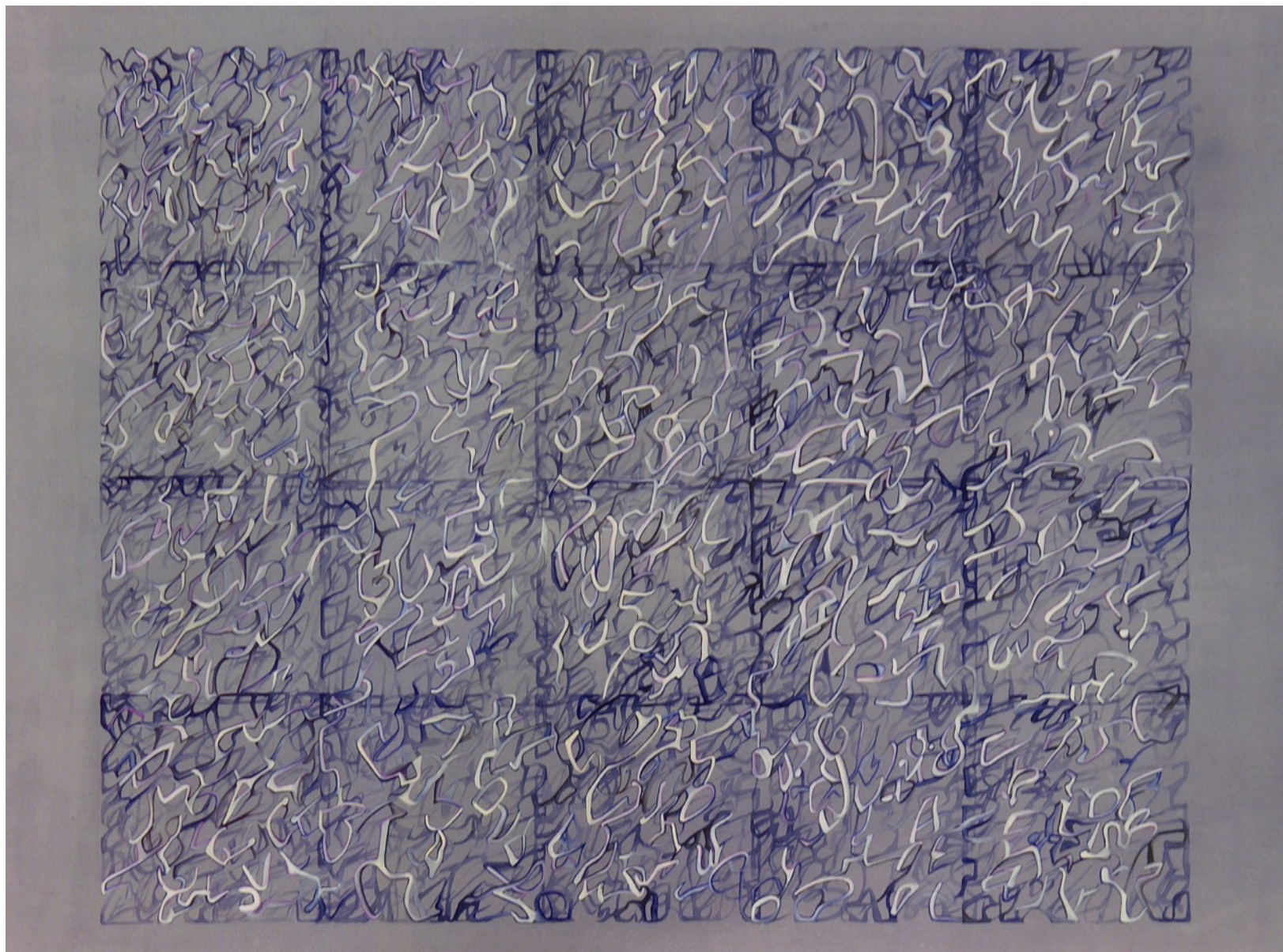
Study for Painting (Black & Silver), 2017
 Gouache on paper
 7 x 5 inches



Quasar, 2009
Spray paint and oil on canvas
60 x 60 inches



Untitled Spray, 2017
Oil and spray-paint on linen
24 x 18 inches



Frenetic Movement in Grey, 2006
Ink, watercolor and gouache on Paper
22 x 30 inches



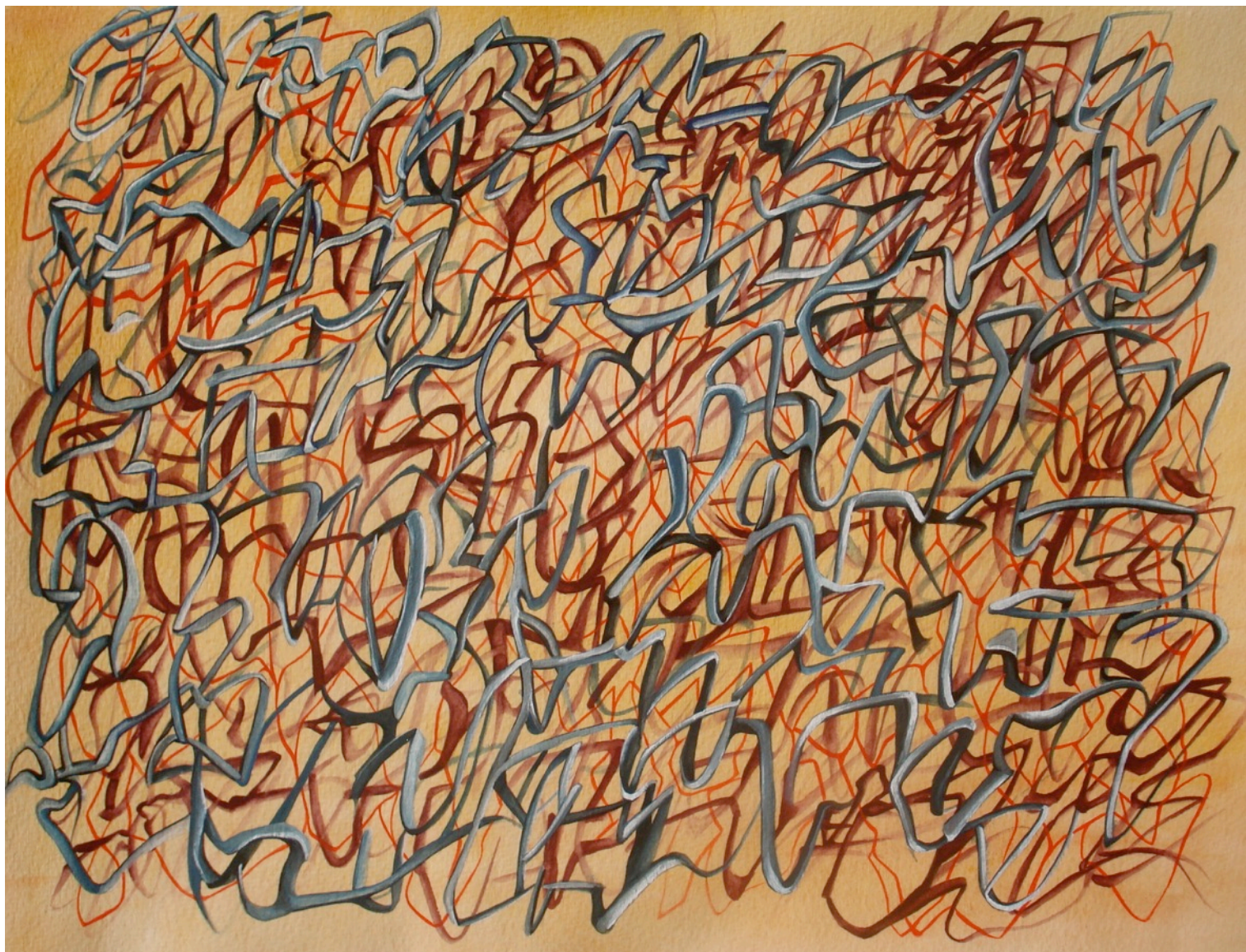
Willow, 2008
Oil and spray-paint on paper
90 ¼ x 45 inches



Binary Star, 2008
Spray-paint and oil on linen
77 x 52 inches



Legible Fiction, 2010
Gouache on paper
22 x 30 inches



Tumult, 2010
Ink, watercolor and gouache on paper
9 x 12 inches



Jugendstil, 2012
Ink, watercolor and gouache on paper
12 x 9 inches



Moss Garden, Installation, 2007:

Hanging Garden, 2007
Watercolor and gouache on kozo paper
79 x 79 inches

Thinly Veiled, 2006
Oil, watercolor and ink on paper
30 x 22 inches

MEGAN OLSON – C.V.

Born 1971, Connecticut

Lives and works in New York, NY

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2014 *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, Berlin Art Projects, Istanbul, Turkey
- 2012 *Legible Fiction*, Davidson Contemporary, New York, NY
- 2010 *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, Berlin Art Projects, Berlin, Germany
- 2009 *Spray Paintings*, Davidson Contemporary, New York, NY
- 2007 *Urban Nature*, Davidson Contemporary, New York, NY
- 2005 *Still Movement*, Maxwell Davidson Gallery, New York, NY
- 2003 *Synapsis*, Maxwell Davidson Gallery, New York, NY
- 2001 *Organic Abstractions*, Maxwell Davidson Gallery, New York, NY

GROUP EXHIBITIONS / ART FAIRS

- 2013 *Fast Forward*, Low Gallery, San Diego, CA
Structure, Pendleton Art Center, Ashland, KY
- 2012 *Pulse Art Miami*, Davidson Contemporary, Miami, FL
Pulse Art LA, Davidson Contemporary, Los Angeles, CA
- 2011 *Pulse Art Miami*, Davidson Contemporary, Miami, FL
Spread the Word Auction, Mark Moore Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 2010 *Pulse*, NY, Davidson Contemporary, New York, NY
Mirrors of Continuous Change, Taekwang & Ilju Academy and Culture Foundation, Seoul, Korea
Grenzenlos. Vielfaltig. Eins., Berlin Art Projects, Berlin, Germany
Charity-Auktion: Bridging the Gap, Beck and Eggeling, Dusseldorf, Germany
- 2009 *Pulse Art Miami*, Davidson Contemporary, Miami, FL
Scope Art Fair, Berlin Art Projects, Basel, Switzerland,
Heimspiel, Berlin Art Projects, Berlin, Germany
Contemporary Art Show 1: Vonderbank Gallery, Berlin, Germany
- 2008 *Pulse Art New York*, Davidson Contemporary, New York, NY
Hot & Cold, Group Summer Show, Davidson Contemporary, New York, NY
Auction to Benefit Children's Cancer and Blood Foundation, Philips de Pury, New York, NY
Checkpoint Ilgen #4, Christian Awe, Megan Olson + works by Barnett Newman, Jackson Pollock, Marc Rothko, David Smith from The Pietzsch Collection, with discussion by Irving Sandler Berlin, Germany
- 2007 *Art Chicago*, Maxwell Davidson Gallery, Chicago, IL
- 2006 *SweetArt New York*, a benefit for the New Orleans Art Community Bohen Foundation, New York, NY
Art Chicago, Maxwell Davidson Gallery, Chicago, IL

- 2005 *Art Basel/Miami Beach*, Maxwell Davidson Gallery, Miami Beach, FL
SF Bayennale, Crossings: A Gathering of Artists, Borderzone Arts, Somarts Cultural Center, San Francisco, CA
San Francisco International Art Exposition, Maxwell Davidson Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2004 *Sneak Peek*, Maxwell Davidson Gallery, New York, NY
San Francisco International Art Exposition, Maxwell Davidson Gallery, San Francisco, CA
The Art Show at The Armory, Maxwell Davidson Gallery, New York, NY
- 2003 *Anatomy of a Drawing: works by Bluemner, Botero, Calder, Cragg, Dali, Dove, Gabo, Holowell, Leger, Lipton, Magritte, Olson, Rouault and Wesselmann*, Maxwell Davidson Gallery, New York, NY
San Francisco International Art Exposition, Maxwell Davidson Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2002 *Art of the 20th Century*, Maxwell Davidson Gallery, New York, NY
Art Cologne, Maxwell Davidson Gallery, Cologne, Germany
The Art Show at the Armory, Maxwell Davidson Gallery, New York, NY
San Francisco International Art Exposition, Maxwell Davidson Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2000 *Group Show, New York Studio Program*, New York, NY
Group Show, Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts, San Francisco, CA
Group Show, The Delivery Room, San Francisco, CA

COLLECTIONS

Taekwang & Ilju Academy and Culture Foundation, Seoul, Korea
 README Collection, the Netherlands

REVIEWS

Kramer, Hilton, "Painter Megan Olson Has Double Vision: Abstract and Realist."
The New York Observer, New York, NY. (6/27/2005): p. 1
 Zieher, Scott "Megan Olson: Organic Abstractions" *NY Arts*. Volume 6, No. 10,
 (October 2001): p. 91

BIBLIOGRAPHY

El Deeb, Youssef, Cover of *Love Without Cause*. Dubai, UAE, 2009
 Ilgen, Fré. *Art No Thing!*. The Netherlands: PRO Foundation, 2004

EDUCATION

2002 BFA, San Francisco Art Institute
 2000 AICAD New York Studio Program

THE NEW YORK OBSERVER

JUNE 27 – JULY 4, 2005

NEW YORK'S WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

Painter Megan Olson Has Double Vision: Abstract and Realist

*Still Movement Exhibition
Depicts Dynamics of Nature
With Oxymoronic Precision*

BY HILTON KRAMER

The American painter Megan Olson (born 1971) calls the current exhibition of her paintings *Still Movement*, which I take to be an allusion to still life -- an impression that's amply confirmed in pictures that depict the dynamic processes of nature with a precision, stability and concreteness that are traditionally reserved for the painting of inert, three-dimensional objects. To this oxymoronic endeavor Ms. Olson brings an eye that's steeped in the movement of the heavens as well as the ocean tides, and a sensibility that finds in the changing character of natural light a challenging range of pictorial subjects.

Museum-Ready at a Tender Age, Olson Captures Natural Light

The result of this concentrated attention to the nuances of nature is a pictorial style that's at once highly abstract and persuasively realist in its fidelity to observed detail. It may be that in the rigorous design of Ms. Olson's pictorial structures some viewers will discover a kinship with the abstractionist aesthetic of Jackson Pollock's celebrated "drip" paintings, but it's doubtful that any such reference is intended by the artist. What's more likely is that a familiarity with abstract painting will incline viewers to discover certain elements of abstraction in what are essentially faithful depictions of the natural world.

This double vision, as it may be called, defines the essential aesthetic character of Ms. Olson's paintings. In studying them we find ourselves observing the way light is refracted in watery depths and in the changing configurations of luminescent skies. This is not landscape or marine painting—or, for that matter, sky-scape painting—as we usually encounter them. There are no horizon lines to be seen and no landmarks to direct our attention, but instead myriad close-up views of unbounded spaces in which to observe the metamorphic impulses of nature itself. The painstaking detail with which each of Ms. Olson's subjects is rendered is itself a feat of micro-representation, and this gives to each painting the look of an elaborate conception that has been fully realized.



Original and compelling: Megan Olson's *Fiery Ocean*, 2004.
Maxwell Davidson Gallery

In Ms. Olson's drawings there's a similar control of abundant detail. These drawings are in themselves a significant achievement: The largest of them in the current show—a 2003 untitled work in watercolor on paper measuring 60 by 40 inches—is a tour de force of such amazing mastery that it instantly nominates itself for prompt entry into a permanent museum collection.

It's a characteristic of Ms. Olson's paintings that she favors a single color for the space that encloses the swirling configurations of silvery light that is her principal subject. In *Fiery Ocean* (2004), for example, the swirling traces of light disport themselves in a ruby-red sea, while in *First Light* (2004) and *Failing Star* (2005) it's an oceanic blue that dominates. In every instance it's color that generates a sense of energy and movement. The pictorial result is unfailingly original and compelling.

Who, then, is Megan Olson, and where has she come from? Her dealer, Maxwell Davidson, provides the following background in his text for the show's catalog:

"During the summer of 2000, Megan Olson was a part-time staff member at the Maxwell Davidson Gallery while she completed a three-month independent study course towards her degree at the San Francisco Art Institute. When we visited the project's unveiling we felt strongly enough about the work to offer Megan representation. Since then, Olson has gone on to have two very successful shows of her organic abstractions done in a variety of mediums, but all applied to paper. This exhibition entitled *Still Movement* marks her third one-person show with the gallery but her first experience on large-scale canvases."

**In a feat of
micro-representation,
Ms. Olson gives each painting
the look of
an elaborate conception
fully realized.**

Clearly, this is an artist with a very promising future. Meanwhile, *Megan Olson: Still Movement* remains on view at the Maxwell Davidson Gallery, 724 Fifth Avenue at 57th Street, through June 25.



MEGAN OLSON: ORGANIC ABSTRACTIONS

Scott Zieher

The whimsical, undulant forms in the drawings of Megan Olson's solo exhibition *ORGANIC ABSTRACTIONS* float like smoke. They drift and morph and dissipate, shimmering in abeyance. A recent graduate of the San Francisco Institute of Art, she exhibits an encouraging and alluring selection of works on paper. They maintain an atmospheric sculptural quality, as if hewn from the lusciousness of ivory, so palpable and delicate.

Some drawings resemble microscopic views of strands of DNA composed of whispering, sugary, sky-blue lines meandering, giddy and awry, the complicated twisting creates a negative space that breathes a chalky translucence. The interlarded, fleshy color between these loose, yarn-like strands is so delicately formed that it seems poised to disappear. Other drawings are like literal descriptions of *virga*, the meteorological term for rain that evaporates before it reaches the ground, each drawing the vaporous carcass of a raindrop. The drawings only fail on the rare occasion when Olson attempts a large scale. Her ideas are intimate and while the temptation must be huge to magnify their tactile aspect, they are better suited to a small format.

In both the shapes of these abstractions and their clean, assured draftsmanship, there is a scientific structure, yet the lyrical lines pull the viewer to a higher, more ethereal place: a graceful exhalation, wind propelling spores through the sky. The titles *Feather* and *Trapeze* confirm this idea of weightless, effortless flight. With *Feather*, Olson approximates the inspired, en plein air *Crooked Run Farm* drawings done by Arshille Gorky in Virginia in the 1940's, as well as the sparest of Cy Twombly's 1950's works on paper. In a brilliant black and white drawing entitled *Twenty*, a group of twenty studies are a cross between antique Chinese brushwork and illustrations from *Gray's Anatomy*. One drawback is the apparent similarity to Brice Marden and the comic-book cloudbursts of Gary Simmons. Yet Olson transcends these with her intimate scale and fluid style.

For all of its many correlates this body of drawings stands out in our age of readily available digital enhancement; they could appear retardataire to some, but one can only hope they signal a rebirth of old-fashioned, careful, tactile and sensuous drawings. □

RED GROOMS: Selections from the Graphic Works

Harriet Zinnes

Who can resist the humor, the masterly draftsmanship, and the sly cultural and political mischief of the artist Red Grooms? New Yorkers will not have to. From July 11 through November 11, 2001 over 100 objects are on view at the National Academy of Design (1083 Fifth Avenue, New York City). Demonstrating the artist's varied printmaking techniques, from etchings, to woodblock prints, and spray-painted stencils, the works include portraits (especially of artists), self-portraits, cityscapes (with an emphasis on the crowds of New York, famous Parisian artists dining at *Les Deux Magots*, and spectacles of all sorts. And all made with a caricaturist's dexterity and tongue-in-cheek.



This is a huge show, and a show that makes the eye restless as it has to move quickly not only from work to work but even within the single work itself. Red Grooms, originally from Nashville, Tennessee, demonstrates to this New York viewer at least a very urban Eastern appetite. Not only does he feast on the sights and sounds of city life whether the Bowery, the ocean, the subways, the skyscrapers, its theaters and movies, he has a New York artist's hunger for the Paris of the early century with its Picassos and Steins and cafes as well as the later art habits of New York's Cedar Bar. Like a social historian who loves color and can twirl a paintbrush with at times the sweep of an Abstract Expressionist, and an artist with a great facility with the line, Red Grooms reports and reports with the humor of a cartoonist. He clearly loves the comics. One thinks of Daumier and of the American Reginald Marsh.

And how Grooms loves Matisse. See here the lithograph of Matisse drawing a nude rendering that famous Brassai photograph. And what about the 1980 print of Duchamp's "Rose Selavy" recalling the Man Ray's photograph of the artist dressed as a woman. Sex, as a matter of fact, is never overlooked in these prints of exuberant and hard to decipher city life. What a tumult each work has. How to make out the heads and bodies squirming and touching and inhabiting a city impossible to read except through the improbable characters in the energetic works of Red Grooms. □

The catalogue essay by Vincent Katz describes wonderfully the graphic works displayed. A pleasure to read and an exhibit a pleasure to see.

Red Grooms
By the Shining Sea
Courtesy the Artist

Left:
Megan Olson
Feather
Courtesy Maxwell
Davidson Gallery

DECEMBER 6, 2018

Check out Megan Olson's Artwork

LOCAL
STORIES

Today we'd like to introduce you to Megan Olson.

Megan, we'd love to hear your story and how you got to where you are today both personally and as an artist.

I was raised in rural Connecticut for the first decade of my life and later moved to Los Angeles. Since then, I've lived in San Francisco, San Diego, New York, and Berlin. I'm back in NY now. Growing up in these urban and rural areas has definitely impacted the way I see the world and make art. While in school at the San Francisco Art Institute, I started experimenting with abstracting the natural forms around me, while being simultaneously inspired by its thriving graffiti culture and the many friends I had that were part of that culture. I started creating my own visual language and automatic writing style – which I went further into when I went to the New York Studio Program. That's when I was discovered by the Maxwell Davidson gallery, who I was with for about 13 years. They saw my work and gave me a show and my professional career was launched, while I was still in art school. I've had the opportunity to show in Chicago several times at the art fair and always enjoyed staying with friends who live in the Loop. The Expo fair is one of the top-notch destinations for art collectors in the United States and whenever I was showing, I would love going to the museum at the Art Institute and Millennium Park. Besides New York, Chicago is one of the top art cities in the country and I'm thrilled for any opportunity to return.

We'd love to hear more about your art. What do you do you do and why and what do you hope others will take away from your work?

I am a painter and work in gouache, watercolor, graphite, spray paint and oil paint. I enjoy working on paper very

much. I was taught early on by a graffiti writer about the sort of basic rules of graffiti. He showed me his black book and told me you needed to come up with an alphabet, even if you only wrote three letters – you needed to write out all 26 in your own style. He was passing down an education to me that I don't think really happens in the graffiti world anymore – and he was doing it not because I was a graffiti writer because I'm not, but because I was an artist. I took this knowledge with me when I was accepted into the NY Studio program and felt an immense pressure to do something different, that hadn't really been seen before. The thought was to develop my own abstract language, an aesthetic one, and it all kind of took off from there. I felt abstraction, could better express the intangibility of life, of emotion. I coupled an abstract, non-decipherable lettering with the organic forms in nature – which was sort of like combining the urban/human components of life with the natural world. I like to unify opposing ideas. I think it's a metaphor for what needs to happen in the real world. We need more unity and less division. Nothing in life is really black or white, so I find that exploring ambiguity is more interesting. My process is more about uncovering and revealing a painting through the process, rather than having a concrete vision or picture in advance. Something about the predictability of a totally preconceived image doesn't hold my attention. I need to be excited and slightly terrified while painting – the fear is that you will make a mistake – usually by overworking something and ruining what you've done. I can definitely get extremely detailed in my work.

Have things improved for artists? What should cities do to empower artists?

I think conditions for artists have always been difficult. I've read that de Kooning had to eat ketchup so he wouldn't starve during the Depression and that always puts me in check when I think the artist's life is tough. The biggest challenge for artists in recent years is the cost of living and finding affordable studio space in the city. Couple that with the various jobs and hustles we have to maintain just to afford to live – it leaves little time for making art. It's a tough vocation and you have to have an inexhaustible work ethic in order to survive.

I think it's in every city's interest to have a thriving art scene. I recently saw that the arts added \$114 billion to the NY state economy, so we know it's lucrative for a city to support the arts. At the very least – landlords should be given some kind of tax incentive to rent affordable studio space to artists. If there could be a program similar to FDR's WPA and Federal Art Project once again, the world for artists would be a much better place. It's a radical idea – but it would create countless jobs and projects for artists. I think cities need to adopt a policy like this and dedicate a large percentage of city funds to go to murals, and other art-related projects. But the artists should have absolute freedom of what they want to create.

Do you have any events or exhibitions coming up? Where would one go to see more of your work? How can people support you and your artwork?

I update Instagram pretty regularly and have a website. I have work with a gallery called Berlin Art Projects from when I lived in Berlin for a year. They took my solo show, "Beyond the Chains of Illusion" from Berlin to Istanbul, Turkey and have some of that work there. I am working out of my studio on the Lower East Side in New York. The best way to obtain my work or schedule a studio visit is by contacting me directly.

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