

ART SPIEL

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Cadences at Equity Gallery

Cadences, a lovely show in the [Equity Gallery](#) curated by Michael Gormley, teases at the language of abstract expressionism without overwhelming the viewer.

In the front room [Elizabeth Gilfilen's](#) large paintings dominate the room in a limited tonal range of mostly one or two colors at a time. Thinly painted layers build up organically on smoothed white canvas surfaces. Lines spider indistinctly outward, branching above and around heavier masses of deeply layered transparent shapes. Biological forms ranging from forested landscapes to microscopic cells, rise to meet the viewer and just as quickly dissipate in the playful brushwork. The uniformly white ground of these paintings make them feel a lot like drawings, a comparison that the artist herself makes. But the paint here is allowed to show off its own specific qualities and the work stays grounded in the world of painting. Though amorphous, there is a clear method to Gilfilen's process and she invites the observer to follow along. Shapes reach out to each other, yearning, like weightless arabesques in open air. The atmosphere created by Gilfilen's paintings is curious and thoughtful, even appetizing. In a few places, paint thinned almost to nothing leaks away from deliberate brushstrokes, thirsty and wandering, highlighting the texture of the canvas and the willful nature of an artist's materials.



Elizabeth Gilfilen, 2018, installation view

In the rear room, the viewer is treated to a more dramatic and aggressive use of paint. In Molly Herman's work, saturated colors are carved, smeared, and splashed onto large and medium canvas and linen surfaces. A whole encyclopedia of mark-making is expressed in paint that drips, wrinkles, shimmers, and cascades around the viewer. A few delicate green waves in the corner of a smaller canvas breaks an aggressive wall of oranges and hot yellows. Burlap and other rough textures further disrupt the surface planes. A thickly painted passage of spiky Prussian Blue practically leaps off a larger work and threatens to run away with the viewer. Organic forms are briefly summoned to flirt with the viewer before they are subsumed with the pure pleasure of paint. There is real joy here, barely contained by the frame of the paintings themselves.

The contrast in the work is thoughtful and provides a nice balance. Where Gilfilen's work entices, Herman's work incites; where Herman's work confronts, Gilfilen's work stimulates. Although the paintings of these two artists share similar rhymes and rhythms, their energy is fundamentally divergent, which left me wanting to see how the paintings might have created a more direct dialogue in the same room rather than experiencing them as separate bodies of work split in two separate rooms. The collective effect of the work in this show is gentle but profound. This viewer found herself still thinking about the show well into the evening, noticing the same natural forms in the stained pavement on the bridge's bike path, the same atmospheric descriptions in the clouds spreading across city skies.



Visitors to the gallery in front of "Root-Vista" and "Willow-Would" (both 2018) by Elizabeth Gilfilen

'Cadences' at Equity Gallery

Elizabeth Gilfilen and Molly Herman, curated by Michael Gormley

October 17th – December 1st, 2018

Equity Gallery, 245 Broome Street, New York, NY 10002

Gallery Hours: Wednesday – Friday, 1-7 PM and Saturday, 12-6 PM



Sharilyn Neidhardt is a Brooklyn-based visual artist. She is a co-founder of the artists' community trans-cen-der and is an assistant curator at Friday Studio Gallery. She's an avid cyclist, loves midnight movies, and speaks only a little German. Her first solo show 'Supermassive Black Hole' opened Sept 7 at Art During the Occupation in Brooklyn. More at sharilynart.com

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