

WAKE UP EARLY, FEAR DEATH

curated by Philipp Kaiser, Los Angeles

CAITLIN LONEGAN, REBECCA MORRIS, LAURA OWENS

Painting was declared dead more than once, yet over the centuries and decades it has continually assumed new formations and reinvented itself. It may be old and seem outdated, but painting is also perhaps the most direct medium, along with drawing, to pursue the question as to what might constitute the image. The three artists in this exhibition, all of whom reside in Los Angeles, are conscious of its history. Still, they all engender a subjective, privatistic cosmos that expands the repertoire of painting in an idiosyncratic way.

In 2004, Rebecca Morris wrote in her eponymous manifesto that her painting was intended to look enigmatic and mythical to a degree that might indicate that she had been locked in a shed since the 1940s. Her explicit claim to autonomy, along with her intuitive point of access, which views historical fixation as positioning rather than limitation, evokes a calm sense of abstraction not dissimilar to the ornamentation of her patchwork quilts. The painterly practice of Laura Owens merges, in polyphonic images, manifold worlds, styles, and textures, to produce privatistic abstractions. On the one hand, these abstractions fathom the potential of image creation in a reflexive manner; on the other, compositions of extreme lightness and self-determination are spawned. The work of Laura Owens and Rebecca Morris attests to a refined subjectivism, which follows the inner voice of painting with utmost faith. The abstractions of Caitlin Lonagan's painting, in turn, mimic the heroic figures of Abstract Expressionism, thus staging subjectivity, as it were. Her compositions are based on sketches and drawings whose marks and traces are translated into large-format images.

Wake Up Early, Fear Death is interested in newly reflexive private and subjective states. Morris, Owens, and Lonagan awaken before the others and create unique works beyond what is already known.

Caitlin Lonagan (*1982, l. in Los Angeles), Rebecca Morris (*1969, l. in Los Angeles), Laura Owens (*1970, l. in Los Angeles)

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