

JOHANNES VOGT

Abby Leigh

“Sledgehammer Paintings”

September 20 – November 3, 2018

Johannes Vogt Gallery is pleased to inaugurate its **new exhibition space at 958 Madison Avenue** with a solo show by New York based artist **Abby Leigh**. For her first show with the gallery Leigh is presenting her most recent body of work on Dibond, *Sledgehammer Paintings*. Powerful and lyrical at the same time, this new direction in Leigh’s work marks a departure within her practice. Her strict geometric vocabulary expands into new territory that allows for figurative associations. Abby Leigh is joining the roster of represented gallery artists.

Leigh’s works invite the viewer to travel inwards and explore our very own desires. As sympathetic beings, we have the tendency to want to fix things. And not only do we want to make an ill thing better, we also want to be the disclosed agents responsible for these noble actions. This then becomes a reciprocal relationship. In our scenario let’s envision that the ill thing in question wasn’t found ill, but perfectly intact and whole - until we chose to damage it, if only to become its responsible restorer to fix it up again. These psychological conundrums are surprisingly not uncommon in the dynamics of our complex system of relationships and translate into the artistic process of creating a *thing* from nothing.

Abby Leigh’s new *Sledgehammer Paintings* are innocent vessels, which have endured these questions - quite physically. They have unknowingly donated their nerveless bodies to this experiment of destruction - becoming motionless vessels for pain and care. As objects, we can use them to ponder, “how different, really, is destruction from construction, pain from care?” Their apathetic skins hold markers to these very intentions and actions - mended dents and scarred cuts. A palette of colors, which could be described as pleasant, even tender, further complicates their ultimate surface rendering. These sweet tones, painted over the Dibond substrates in pigment, oil and wax, are not typically associated with such mutilation. But it is these layers of choices - executed in painterly gestures and playful mark-making, which gives way to a complex being - and as with most beings from the inside out.

Abby Leigh lives and works in New York. She has been exhibiting her work since the early 1980s in both the US and Europe. Her work can be seen in many public collections, including The Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY; The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; and Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT. Her work has found critical acclaim in outlets such as the Brooklyn Rail, Art in America, The New Yorker and ArtNews, among others. Leigh had three solo shows with Betty Cunningham Gallery in New York. Further exhibitions include Stux Gallery, New York, NY; 315 Gallery, New York, NY; and Meridian Gallery, San Francisco, CA. This exhibition marks Leigh’s first solo show of paintings in New York in 9 years.

Johannes Vogt Gallery is committed to bringing attention to the complex artistic and cultural ties that bind New York to Europe, the Americas, and beyond. The gallery program features a strong roster of mid-career artists and has become known for reintroducing established artists to new audiences, including Garth Evans, Mernet Larsen, and Abby Leigh, among others. Founded in 2011, Johannes Vogt first opened at 526 West 26th Street in New York City’s Chelsea neighborhood, where it resided before relocating to 55 Chrystie Street in the Lower East Side. In September 2018, the gallery relocated to the Upper East Side at 958 Madison Avenue.

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