

Beth Letain

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November 16 – December 22, 2017

Opening Thursday, November 16, 6–8PM

Peres Projects is pleased to present a solo exhibition of new works by Canadian artist Beth Letain. Letain's first solo exhibition at the gallery consists of works created specially for the space, refining a series of leitmotif that are part of Letain's painting style.

Beth Letain's works act as a lever, her canvas the point at which precarious forms balance, displacing any preconceptions that the viewer has. The artist is a former microbiologist who shifted her focus to painting, since then she has worked within an intentionally limited vocabulary. The artist references circuitry, portals and mitosis, seen at points of transfer, duplication and connection. The works that inhabit Peres Projects in this iteration are born from Letain's relentless pursuit to find the limit of these forms. Her work offers a subtle incomprehensibility. The artist presents a series of repetitive forms that come together in surprising combinations.

Artworks are given a second life by the gaze of the viewer, in a very real way they exist as many times as they are looked upon. The discussion of art is akin to dissection, yet Letain offers resistance to a run of the mill post mortem. Her works duplicate, replicate, and yet suggest that it is our gaze that is repetitive. Beth Letain forces us into a dialogue by challenging what we see. Bold colors offer unplumbed depths, while negative spaces offer new configurations, which feel as if sanded to a smooth velvet.

This deliberately long process is contrasted by the fast, almost gestural execution of the formal shapes in oil paint, embracing mistakes and the uncertainty at the center of a creative contradiction. By removing the precision that the viewer expects from a predictable pattern, the artist defies the conventions of minimalism.

Beth LETAIN (b. 1976, CA) studied at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, and SUNY Purchase College, graduating with an MFA in 2008. She has exhibited recently in Berlin, Montreal, Brooklyn, and Boston. She currently lives and works in Berlin, Germany.

Peres Projects's opening hours are Monday through Friday, 11am – 6pm. For further information and sales inquiries, please contact Javier Peres (jp@peresprojects.com), Nick Koenigsknecht (nick@peresprojects.com) or call at +49 (0) 30 275 950770. For press and media inquiries, please contact media@peresprojects.com or +49 (0) 30 275 950770.

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The Weight of a Scale

In a recent translation of the Pentateuch, it was discovered that Jacob's ladder is actually a ramp. This news was not all bad. The ramp, helpful when moving a couch, is useful because it displaces weight; a ramp is a shape for adjusting a burden.

The forms of Beth Letain, however, are mostly square, to use the term loosely. Her lines wobble. Her gravity is evasive. Letain's paintings rearrange the metaphysical schema and her ladders, shoddy at the rungs, are not made for climbing.

Despite having ramps, ascension in ancient Egypt was tough too, and it was governed by a ritual called the Weighing of the Heart. In this ceremony a soul was appraised and given an afterlife if the heart was found weightless when measured against a feather.

In Letain's pictures there is no such standard. Her paintings don't ease the soul by satisfying taste. Instead her forms wander on and off the scale as if they're trying to see what you are trying to weigh. Her pictures are curious about your measurements, curious about what you're looking at. Letain uses the form of Painting to misplace the burden of gaze. Her pictures shy away from physical metaphor, words get slippery. And if her paintings hold any gravity, it's probably equal to the weight of your scale.

- Aaron Weldon

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ing body my body slipping

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- Susan Howe, from *Frolic Architecture*

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