

For Immediate Release

ELIZABETH DWORKIN | Paint
September 27 - November 4, 2023

VICTORIA MUNROE
fine art

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Memory, 2022, oil on board, 36 x 30 inches



Wait, 2021, oil on board, 24 x 30 inches

From September 27 through November 4, 2023, Victoria Munroe Fine Art presents ELIZABETH DWORKIN: *Paint*. Featuring recent oil paintings on canvas and on board, this exhibition highlights the unique compositional strategies Dworkin invents with her swift gestural brushstroke and strident palette. Victoria Munroe Fine Art first exhibited Dworkin in the 1980s and 1990s, in the Prince Street gallery when her abstract paintings first won wide critical acclaim and since 2019 at the current Upper East Side location.

Born in Rochester, NY, Elizabeth Dworkin graduated from Cornell University with a B.F.A. in 1965. She moved to Boston where she showed at the Nielsen Gallery for two decades and helped found the Boston Visual Artists Union which called for public institutions within Boston to exhibit and collect contemporary art. In 1979, Dworkin moved to New York City into her Lower East Side loft where she still resides and maintains her studio.

The move to New York had a profound impact on her paintings. As a reflection of the density of her new city, her abstracted forms, previously given negative space to breathe on the canvas, became layered rectangles of jumbled color suggesting urban skylines. The movement in her energetic brushwork and singular palette became signature characteristics of her ambitious canvases in the 1980s and 1990s and continue to set her apart as an abstract painter of distinction. As in *Cavern*, 2022 and *Memory*, 2022, patches of oil paint seem to have landed on the substrate and could be called to leave at any moment. Adding to the action in her compositions, many paintings feature graphic allusions to stairs, pathways, zigzags, sharpened triangles, and crenelated motifs, inviting the viewer to move through her spaces. Two paintings in this exhibition, *Wait*, 2021 and *Help*, 2021, feature Dworkin's handprint, a motif she uses repeatedly to say, "Stop, the viewer and artist are here."

In a November 1986 review for *Art in America*, Holland Cotter described the colors in Dworkin's paintings as, "often brilliant, always odd." Continuing in that vein, Dworkin weaves unusual color combinations throughout her canvases. Rich rust reds contrast with muted grays and off-whites, pinks wash with striking yellows and moss greens, and triangles of lilac anchor multiple canvases. In these paintings, she employs her hallmark black, used confidently as outline and fill, never swallowing the compositions even in the heaviest uses.

For years Dworkin has maintained a residence in the Northern Catskills where she draws inspiration from her views of the untouched landscape. Some of the rigid structures are softened by the evidence of nature. This is evident in her

(over)

most recent painting, *Pond*, 2023; thinned paints are softened and wrapped around each other with no use of her signature black framings, the way a pond and the surrounding foliage bleed into each other.

Viewers frequently try to ascribe meaning to shapes in Dworkin's paintings. A firm believer in the power of abstraction, she does not confirm what the viewer sees in her compositions. Instead, she views her abstractions as opportunities to feel, to remember, and to wonder. As stated in the 1986 exhibition catalog essay by Stephen Westfall, "Her subject is, first and foremost, painting."

Elizabeth Dworkin's work is in the collections of the Addison Gallery of American Art at Phillips Academy, DeCordova Museum, Mead Art Museum at Amherst College, and Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University, among other private and public collections. She studied at Cornell University and taught at Massachusetts College of Art, Brown University, Rhode Island School of Design, Princeton University, to Florida International University, among others. She has lectured across the country and was a Juror for the Ohio Arts Council in 1984 and 1990.



Fen, 2023, oil on canvas, 48 x 60 inches

For further information and reproduction-quality images, please contact Margo Hudson
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