MIXED GREENS

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Group Exhibition: *January*

Zander Blom, Vince Contarino, Elise Ferguson, Angela Hoener, Marisa Manso, Julie Oppermann, Suzanne Song, Rebecca Ward

January 15 – February 14, 2015
Opening Reception: Thursday, January 15, 6-8pm

Mixed Greens is thrilled to present a group exhibition of abstract paintings by Zander Blom, Vince Contarino, Elise Ferguson, Angela Hoener, Marisa Manso, Julie Oppermann, Suzanne Song, and Rebecca Ward. The works engage in an ongoing dialogue between contemporary artists in the field of abstraction that range from formal concerns to the actual process of painting and its materiality.

Zander Blom's painting practice is driven by his urge to develop new techniques and tools as well as his penchant for heavily referencing Modernist painting. His recent paintings–in which geometric planes and dynamic strokes of paint hover atop raw linen–are a continuation of this process. Loose, alive, and still crisp, these paintings emerge from the Modernist tradition of seeking and resolving formal problems through abstraction.

Vince Contarino resists a narrow or preordained process in his paintings, creating space through gestural brush marks and color only to subvert it by weaving in slow and deliberate geometric forms. Rather than resolving a structure early on, Contarino often lets the initial layer of paint dictate the work's direction, many times destroying the very image he is seeking. The resulting work offers a bold commitment to exploring the possibilities of abstraction.

Elise Ferguson plays with spatial perception through pattern and color in her geometric variations. With MDF panels as her chosen base, Ferguson builds up multiple layers of pigmented plaster to create sculptural painting objects. Moments of irregularity occur among the formal optical patterns, revealing the artist's process that fully embraces chance, improvisation, and intuition as essential to her painting.

Angela Hoener challenges the traditional surface of painting through various techniques including the integration of unorthodox materials such as plastic packaging and removing significant portions of the usually unadulterated canvas support. Her work takes visual and technical cues from a wide array of sources, from old master paintings to glossy fashion magazines, which is unsurprising given Hoener's background in both academic painting and contemporary art.

Marisa Manso creates atypically shaped canvases that often incorporate functioning electrical fixtures. The physical boundaries of traditional painting are addressed by subverting rectangular surface planes and expanding beyond the spatial limitations of a stretcher. The electric fixtures assume the playful, poetic role of bringing literal light in addition to metaphorical light into the paintings, allowing the work an exuberant quality while challenging long-standing conventions.

Julie Oppermann's paintings contain visual logic reminiscent of both Op art and digitally generated images on a computer screen. Layers of offset linear patterns, juxtaposed colors, and the large scale of the canvases create compelling and disorienting tensions. The difficulty of perceiving a static image (the patterns appear to move) exposes the limitations of our perceptual processes while suggesting that 'seeing' happens in the brain as opposed to the eye.

Suzanne Song is known for a restrained use of materials to create spatial illusions in her paintings. In this new body of work, Song continues to quietly warp our perceptions of space and depth by using shadow and gritty textural manipulations of the painting's surface. Geometric abstractions seemingly leap into three dimensions.

Rebecca Ward uses the language of abstract painting to examine the canvas as a physical object. The material is ruptured, sewn, unraveled, and painted with particular attention to balancing line, form, and space. In doing so, her work inevitably references the gendered roles associated with craft and medium, exploring femininity through handmade objects.