

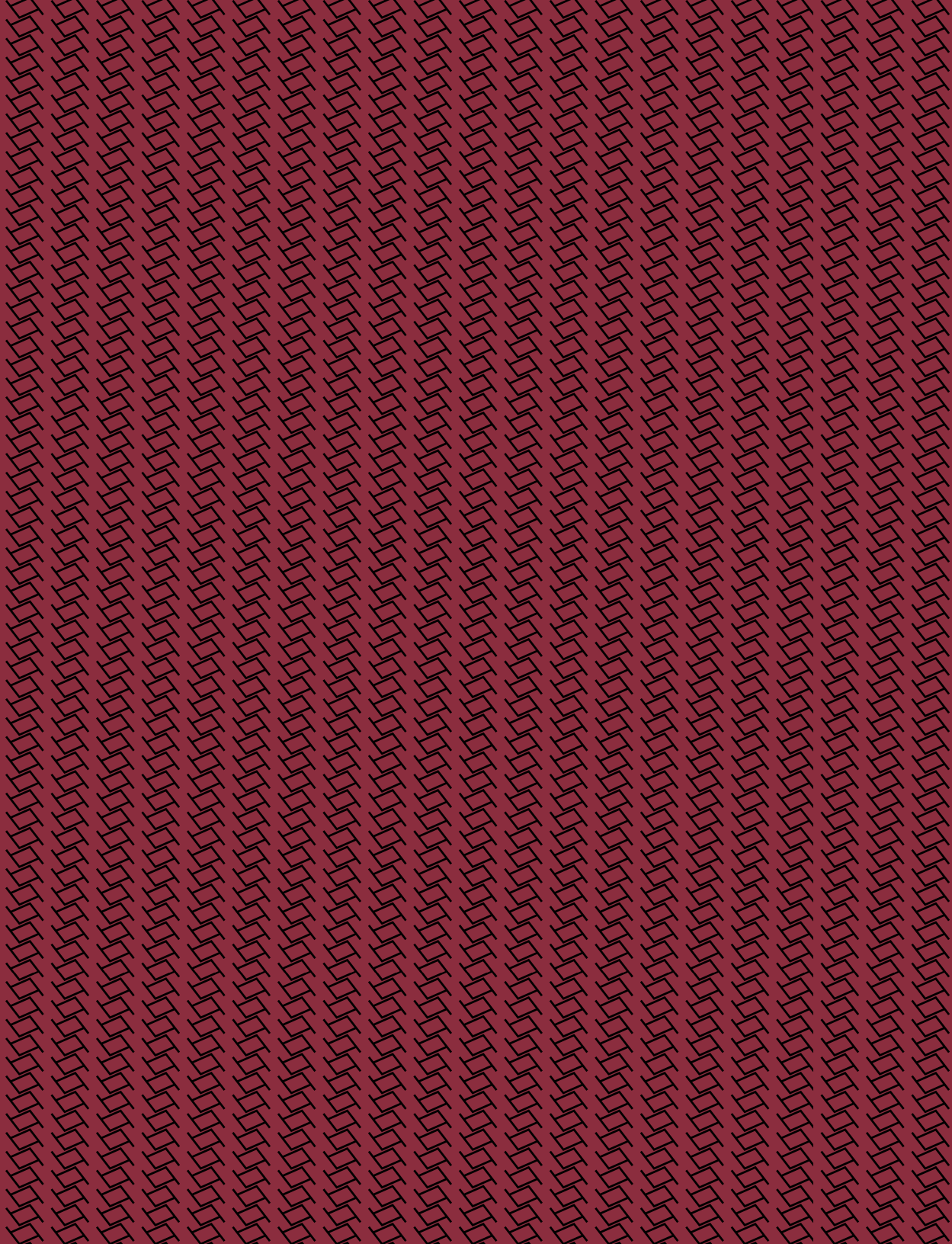
CAMERON MARTIN

ABSTRACTS

CAMERON MARTIN: ABSTRACTS UNIVERSITY ART MUSEUM | UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY

UNIVERSITY ART MUSEUM
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STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK





A T R F A
R T O A

CAMERON MARTIN

A E S T R
A C T S

JUNE 30 - SEPTEMBER 9, 2017
UNIVERSITY ART MUSEUM | UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

FOREWORD

In *Abstracts*, and in this catalogue to accompany it, Cameron Martin's arc as a painter reveals its latest turn. The University Art Museum first presented Martin's work in 2009 in *Uncharted*, a group exhibition that equated a certain type of exploration with the artistic process, in which the "results of beginning any new venture without a map" were unexpected and far more than the sum of their parts. Back then, Martin was making paintings that I described in the *Uncharted* catalogue as "large-scaled, photographically based landscape paintings—distilled images of luminous mountains and rock formations, in which through a complex layering of paint, built by masking and spraying, he achieved seemingly impenetrable grayscale surfaces as alluring and foreboding as the terrains they embody."

But in 2014, after years of exploring representation and seriality in relationship to images of nature, Martin changed course. He re-engaged with elements of painting that he had marginalized in the studio: play, and the freedom to entertain productive failure, became his new dictums. During a recent studio visit, Martin outlined a list of other rules: no source material; no agenda; always color; small in scale; each painting a new departure, with its own distinct optical and conceptual purpose; each painting follows its own internal logic. And so, out of these self-imposed generative guidelines, where rules dictate painterly process but formulas and hierarchies are abolished, Martin has produced a new body of non-objective paintings. The paintings in *Abstracts*, while distinct, also form relationships with other paintings. Martin describes them this way: "I often think of these paintings as operating the way a community ideally could, with strong individuals working in tandem, finding affinities but also antagonizing each other in order to produce something larger."

Despite early pronouncements to the contrary, Martin acknowledges that ultimately it is impossible to move too far from one's core makeup and predictions. These new paintings, while wholly original, reach back to his painting "past." The mystery of how he makes his paintings, and what they mean, remains; each is a precise, intricate meditation that encourages slow viewing.

Like his dislocated and muted landscapes, the new paintings are cool, at times seemingly detached, yet oddly familiar. The colors, the shapes, the rhythmic patterns—we have seen them before, but where? He has always teased us with this deliberate ambiguity. From Grandmother's fusty wallpaper to utopian Constructivist grids, Martin has absorbed it all in new paintings that are individual and seamless in execution, both hermetic and boundless in scope.

There are many acknowledgements to be made upon occasions like these. The first must go to Cameron Martin, who with rigor, intensity, and guts has again produced a body of work that confounds and challenges our relationship to painting in an uncharted world.

Thank you also to Interim President James R. Stellar, Interim Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Darrell P. Wheeler, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs William B. Hedberg, and former UAM Director Janet Riker.

And then, hats off to the incredible museum staff, a team of seasoned pros who unfailingly get the job done: Zheng Hu, balancer of the fresh and the classic in every publication he designs; Jeffery Wright-Sedam, whose vision, mad skills, and pragmatism make every exhibition appear seamless; Naomi Lewis, whose insight, acute perception, and steady head drives every project forward; Darcie Abbatiello, consummate planner, whose care and commitment brings it all together and makes it real; Alana Akacki, the newest member of the team, who already manages every detail of our work life without a missed beat; and the irreplaceable Joanne Lue, to whom, upon her retirement, infinite thanks are due. She is, and will always be, the heart and soul of this museum.

Corinna Ripps Schaming
Associate Director and Curator
University Art Museum, University at Albany



Transmission, 2015
Acrylic on canvas
20 x 16 inches

ABSTRACTS

Suzanne Hudson

Cameron Martin has worked with appropriated photographic and mass media materials, often figuring a willfully denatured landscape cleaved from a specificity of references such sources might permit. Most recently, in 2014, he showed a series of large-scale, monochromatic white and light gray paintings: blanched crags and forest groves isolated within insistently assertive bracketing devices, with multiple borders and geometric overlays positioned at the edges. For an artist known over the last decade for making works in this vein—culling advertisements, snapshots, and other found views for application within composed scenes of the natural world—his recent eschewal of depicted subject matter might surprise some. And yet the would-be frames that call attention to the visual field, and by extension the nature of its mediation, prove his concerns about the formal processes of painting to be continuous. They make clear that landscape has long been a pretext for Martin's working over of conventions of picturing as given in a particular genre.

Martin himself already suggested as much in a *Brooklyn Rail* interview in 2011. In conversation with Greg Lindquist, Martin acknowledged his interest “in the image as a subject.” Lindquist specified that it was nevertheless “almost always a landscape,” to which Martin responded: “I tend to be more interested, in terms of other painters, in people who are engaged with ideas around perception. Something that happens with my work, because of the inclusion of images of nature, is that it becomes the de facto topic of the work. But I’m also interested in trying to think about what purpose there is at this point in time in



Prom Song, 2017
Acrylic on canvas
20 x 16 inches

actually making a painting...”¹ In this, Martin asserts the *why* over the *what*, a privileging that extends to the paintings in the exhibition, collected from his studio work of the last three years. They comprise a group of non-objective paintings, begun in 2014. Here, on comparatively smaller-scale supports, which evidence a reduction of size without attendant diminution of complexity, Martin does realize a series of reversals of practice. Chief among them: these pieces are no longer serial, with each cleaved from sequence or priority; where there was maintenance of horizontal format, they adhere instead to a vertical orientation; and they trade luscious if muted grisaille for a near-Technicolor palette of citron and melon, carnation pink and burgundy, lacquer red and highlighter blue.

Thus even as most of the paintings in *Abstracts* primarily adhere to a standard support size of 20 by 16 inches, the results of Martin’s attempts at conjuring a composition into being are emphatically non-self-same. And if they look premeditated in their technical perfection—their clean, facture-less surfaces are the result of Martin’s application of paint by low-pressure spray or other tools alternative to a brush—they are far from inevitable. (Indeed, the presence of paintings that contradict this show no rules to be inviolate.) Neither ready-mades nor abstractions from extant materials, they are formed upon anticipation, accident, and contingency—though they forego the visual correlates of gestural mark-making that so commonly serve to pictorialize this narrative. An abstract painterly language of calculation and risk, mastery and potential failure, need not abide within the look of expressivity. Yet despite this, they are finely layered, transparent pellicles that instantiate relationships of color, pattern, and mutual, perhaps responsive, belonging. Attention to their surfaces reveals a labor-intensive and far-from-foregone development, a series of minute calculations based upon incommensurate organizational principles. It is no accident that Martin sought to make each painting unlike whatever he had already done, while operating within the parameters that he licensed for the project. Against givens, each painting had to be made differently; each, then, would necessarily look different too, while equally relating at the level of method to the others achieved in their company.

Elements repeat but only assert difference. Lines may be bent or straight, parallel or tangled, loopy or spiked. For example, in *Transmission*, 2015, Martin aggregates finely wrought striations, fields comprised of stripes put down so close together as to frequently appear to be touching, which expand into broader



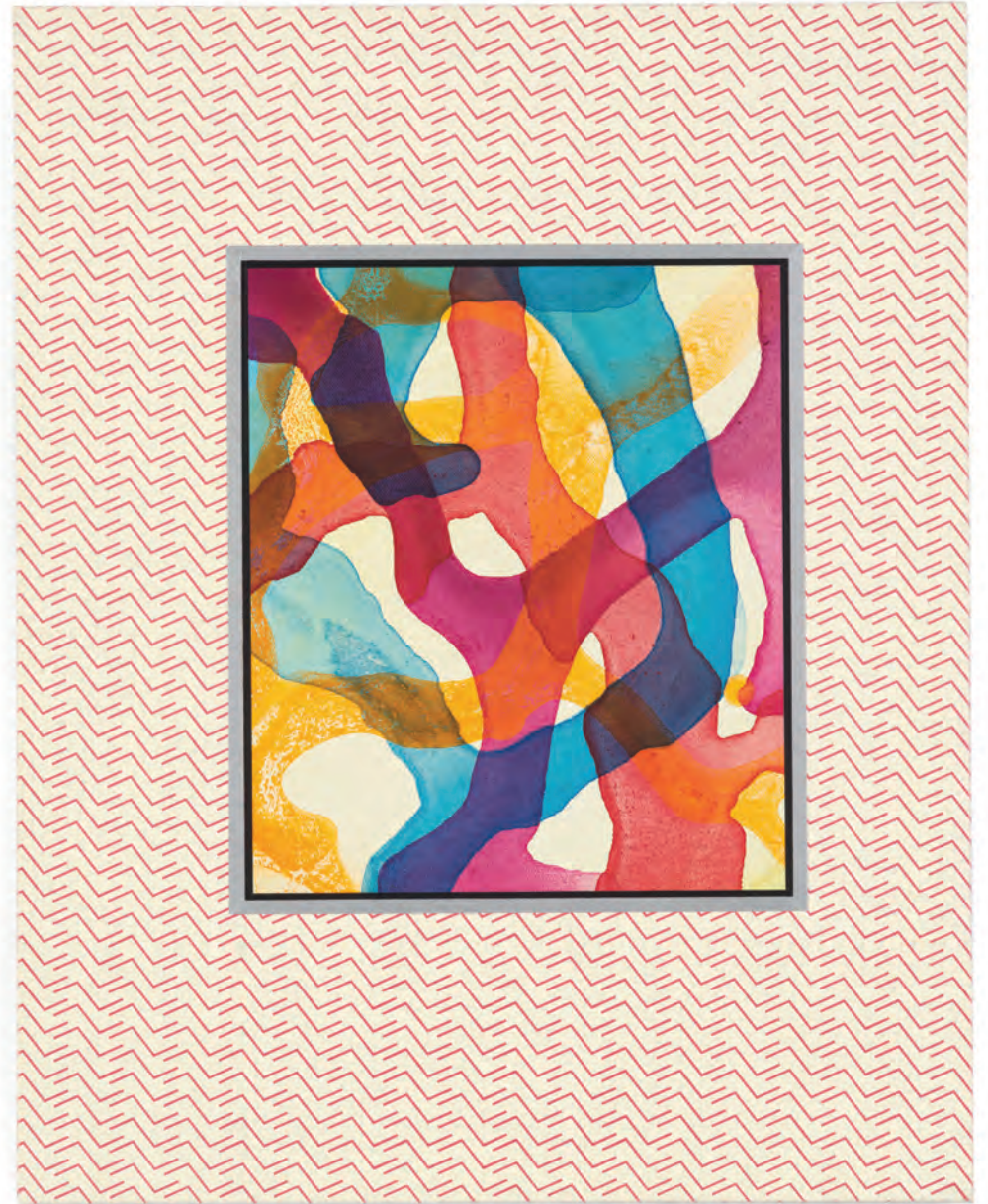
Parcel, 2016
Acrylic on canvas
20 x 16 inches

but still comparatively local sites of integrated color. The optical moiré undulates and toys with a paradoxical tactility that the perfectly flat ground contradicts. The rest are no less frontal, even when spaces seem to open from within. *Prom Song*, 2017, pushes its geometries to the foreground, as if all are wafer-thin and adhere to the same plane—an effect the Swiss cheese holes and interstices within the lattice of the off-kilter grid perform without resolving. *Parcel*, 2016 is a jigsaw-like assemblage of pieces bearing lines alternately diagonal or crossed. A representation of a collage that depends upon its distance from this referent to do its work, it relates to *Chapter*, 2014, *Formation*, 2015, and *Actuary*, 2017, where Martin again marks their perimeters in a kind of infinite regress of image within image.

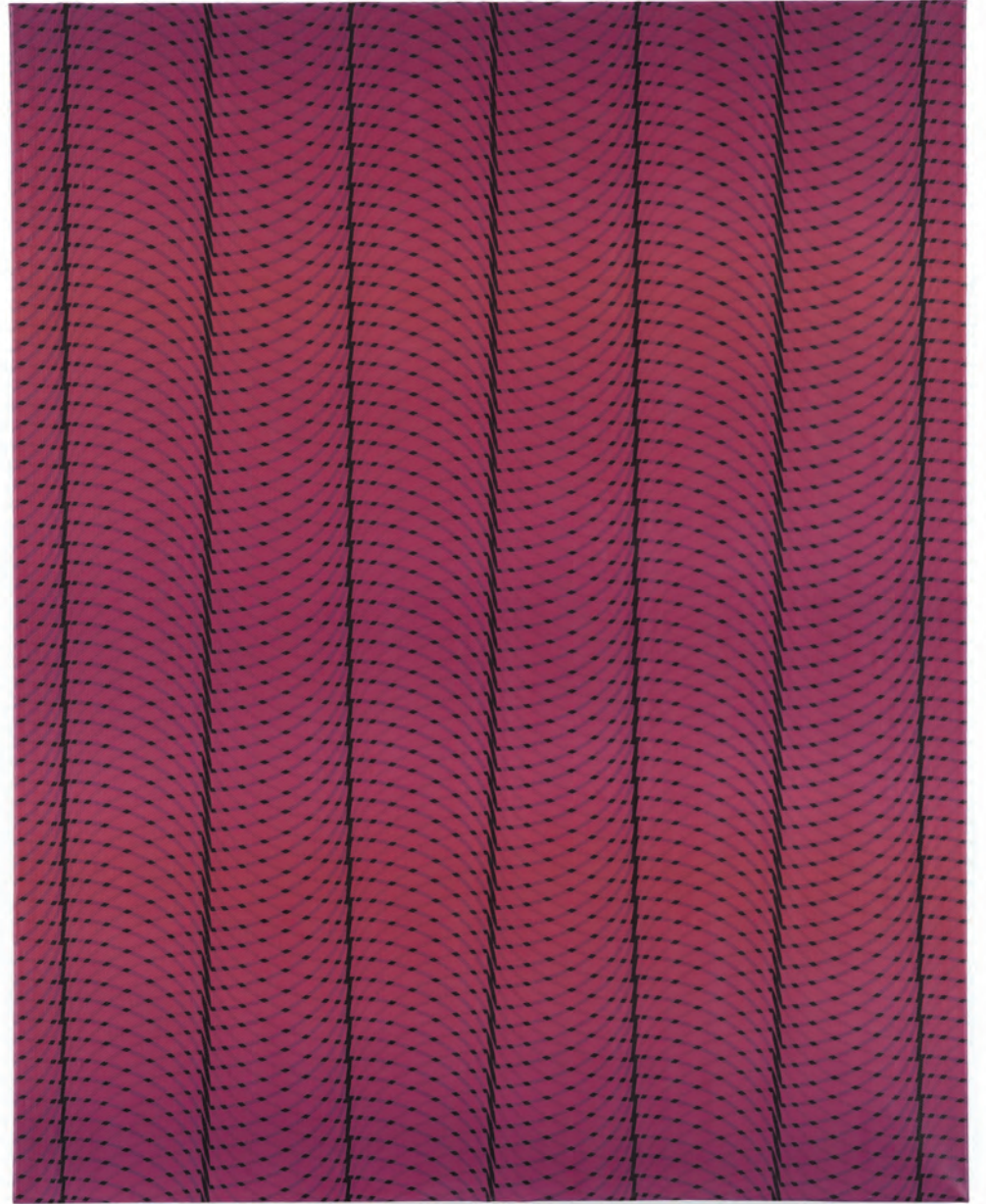
More specifically, he does this work on abstraction in the proximity of screens and machines as a sort of nominal subject. This is to suggest that in his recent paintings, Martin admits existing sympathies. Tangible things like a mountain peak do not obviate abstraction for him, but rather occasion it as a function of perception: dilation, appreciation, and intimacy. In a rather more social register, the quality of that abstraction from the primary content is as contingent—as open to the vicissitudes of time and technology—as its representational given. If the landscapes engage not the vastness of some prelapsarian wilderness but its refraction through various presentational structures, the current paintings similarly rely upon the history and conventions of abstraction to set a program of work that attempts not primacy but self-reflexive redundancy that proves anything but. This last point adheres most forcefully in Martin's predilection for frames, his contextualizing insistence on the representational act before the representation. These paintings are made, not given, and bounded by strictures—self-imposed and otherwise—that are present at the moment of their emergence.

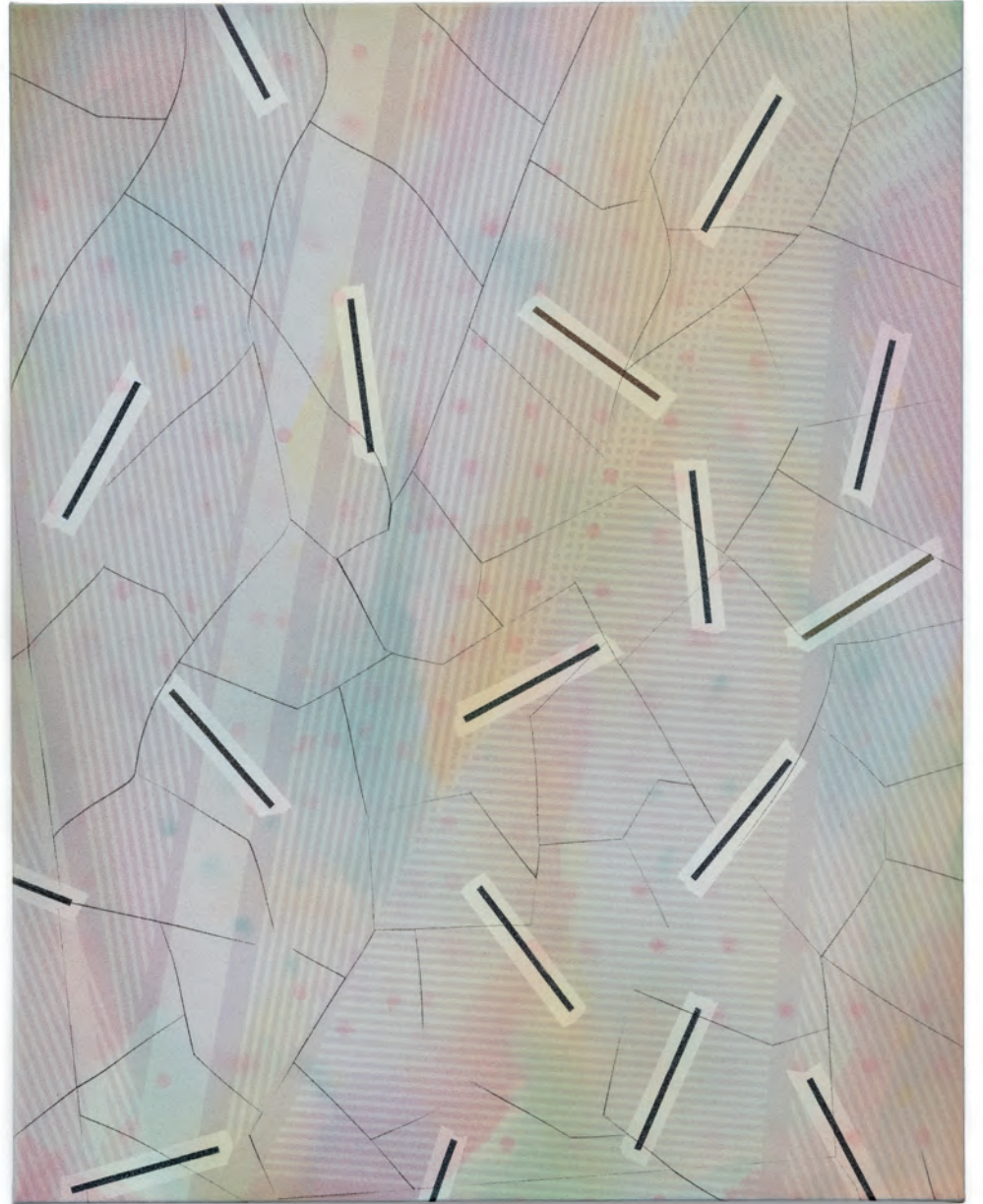
Suzanne Hudson is an art historian and critic based in Los Angeles.

¹ <http://brooklynrail.org/2011/03/art/cameron-martin-with-greg-lindquist>

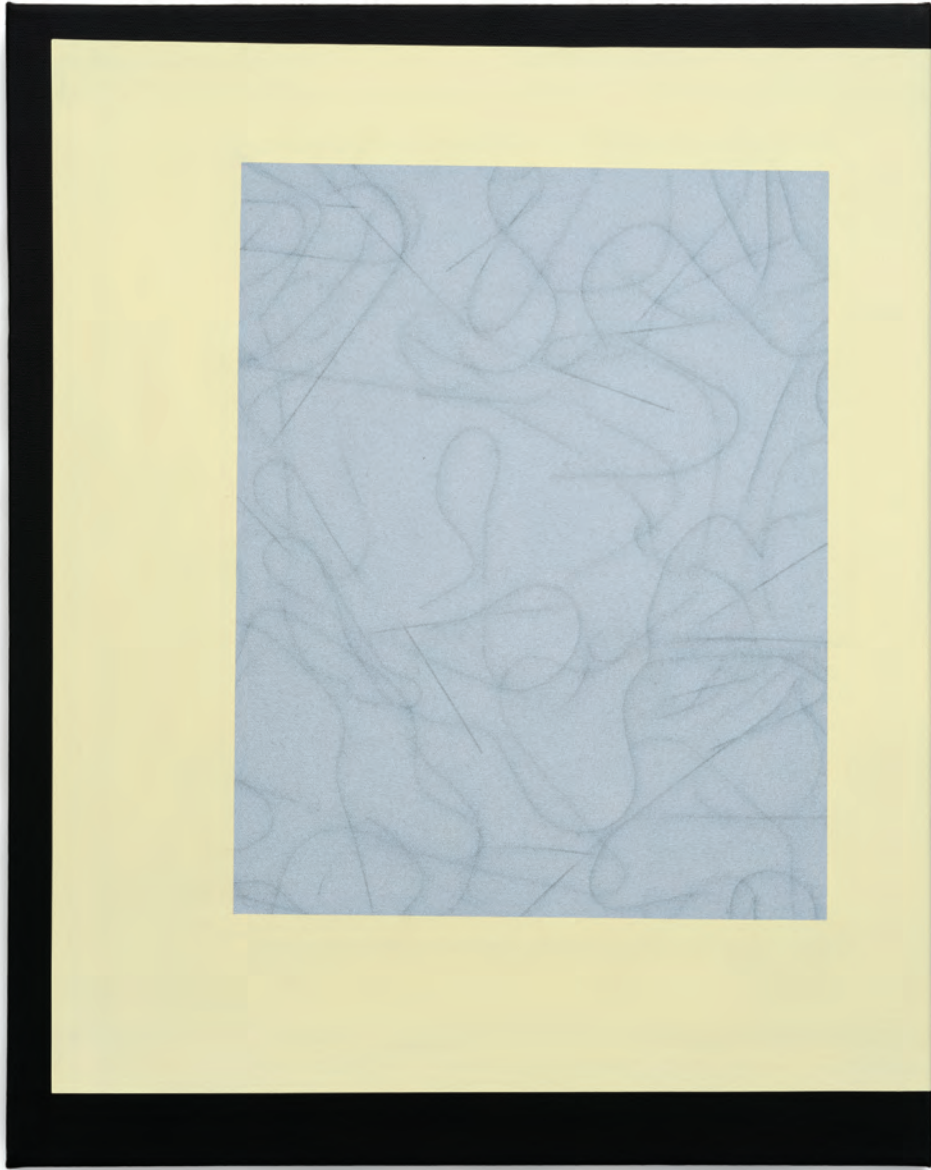












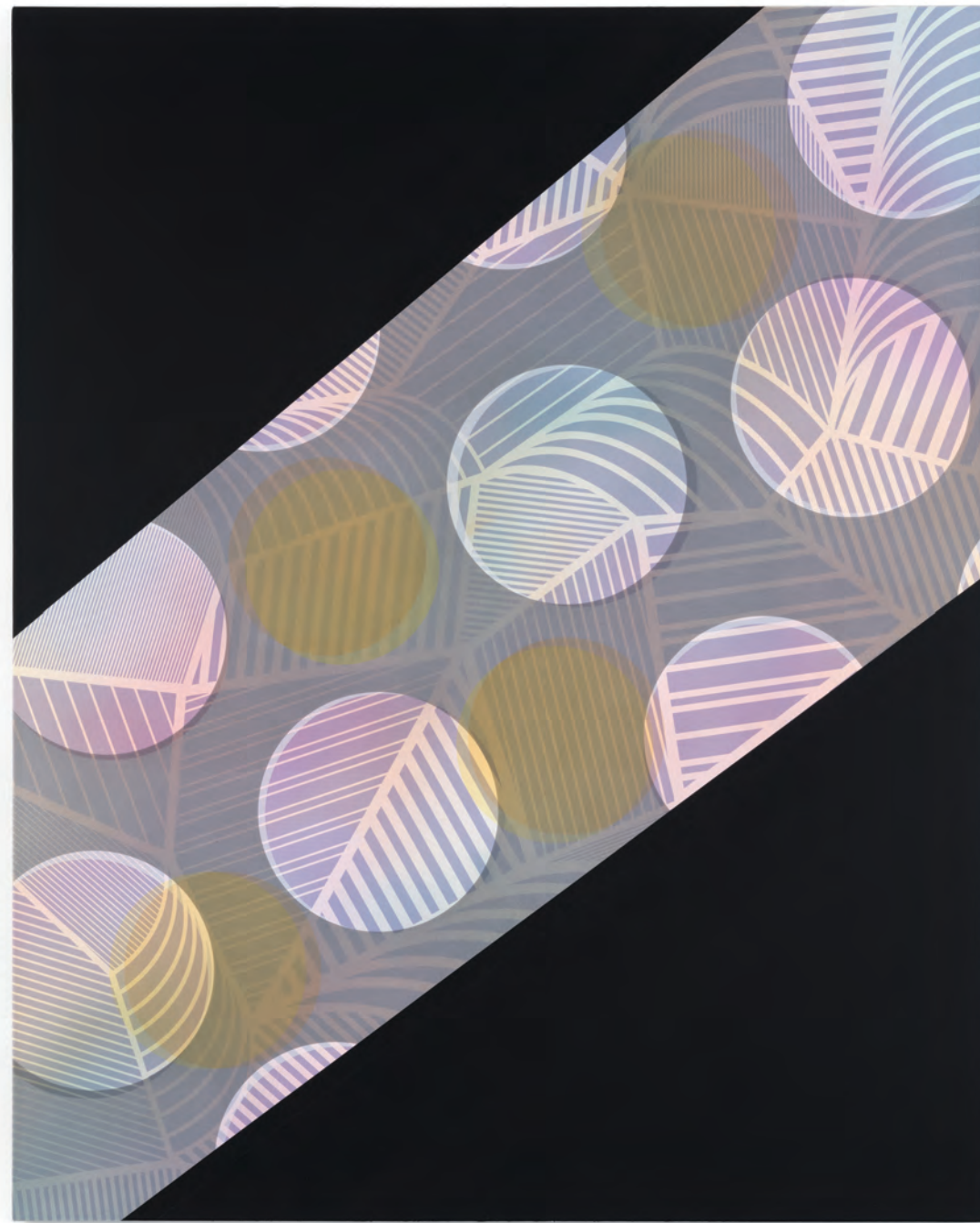


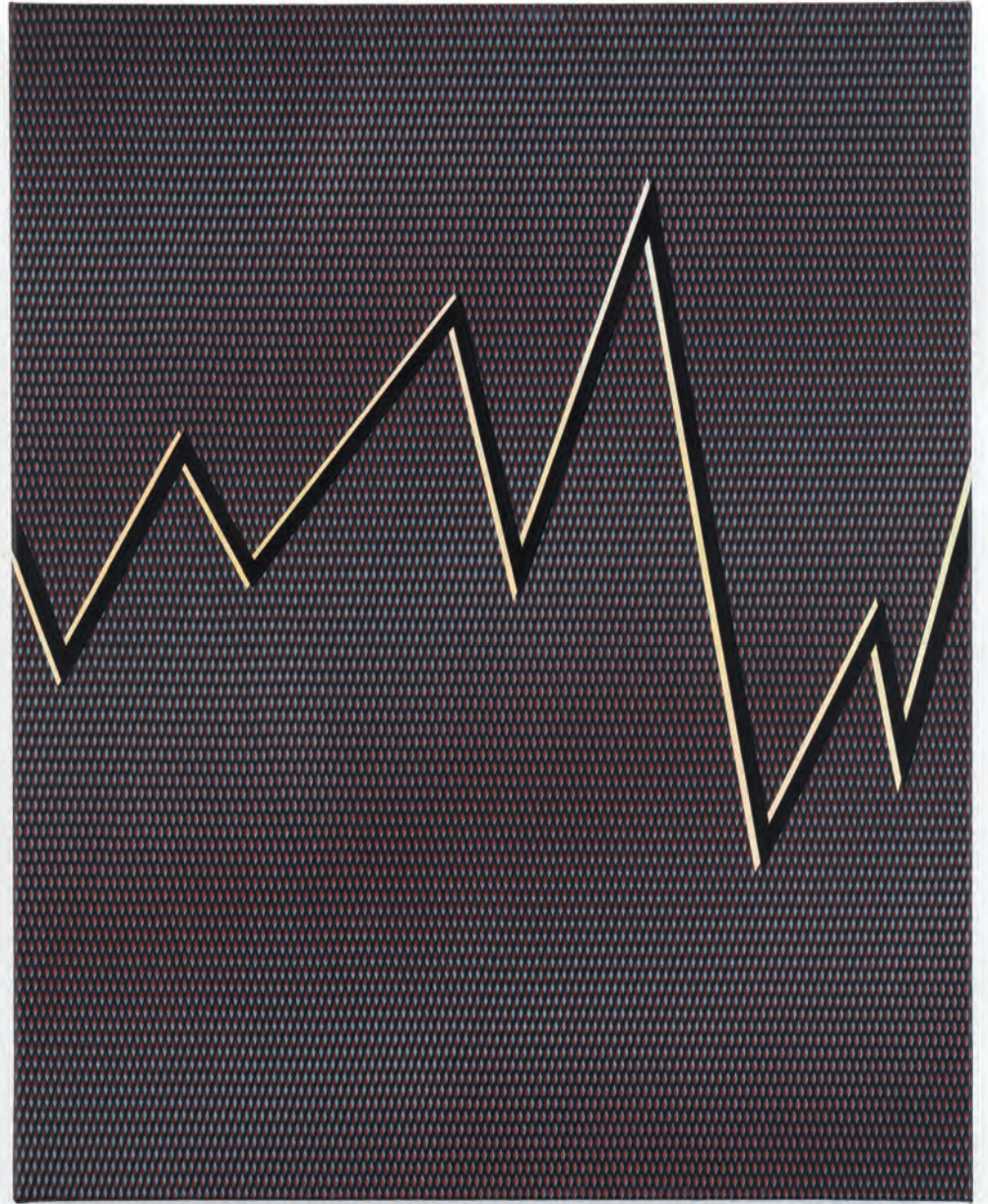


24 | *Formation*, 2015
Oil on canvas
20 x 16 inches



Sensate, 2016
Oil on canvas
20 x 16 inches | 25





CHECKLIST

<i>Actuary</i> , 2017 Acrylic on canvas 20 x 16 inches	<i>Tectonis</i> , 2016 Acrylic on canvas 20 x 16 inches
<i>Aperture</i> , 2017 Acrylic on canvas 50 x 40 inches	<i>Vibros</i> , 2016 Acrylic on canvas 20 x 16 inches
<i>Finis</i> , 2017 Acrylic on canvas 20 x 16 inches	<i>Formation</i> , 2015 Oil on canvas 20 x 16 inches
<i>Prom Song</i> , 2017 Acrylic on canvas 20 x 16 inches	<i>RSR</i> , 2015 Acrylic on canvas 20 x 16 inches
<i>Quota</i> , 2017 Acrylic on canvas 20 x 16 inches	<i>Transmission</i> , 2015 Acrylic on canvas 20 x 16 inches
<i>Ascription</i> , 2016 Acrylic on canvas 30 x 24 inches	<i>Chapter</i> , 2014 Acrylic on canvas 20 x 16 inches
<i>Parcel</i> , 2016 Acrylic on canvas 20 x 16 inches	<i>Paratactic</i> , 2014 Acrylic on canvas 20 x 16 inches
<i>Sensate</i> , 2016 Oil on canvas 20 x 16 inches	<i>Wave One</i> , 2014 Acrylic on canvas 20 x 16 inches

BIOGRAPHY

Born 1970 Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY	
	Education
1996	Whitney Museum Independent Study Program, New York, NY
1994	B.A., Brown University, Providence, RI
	Solo Exhibitions
2017	<i>Abstracts</i> , University Art Museum, University at Albany, SUNY, Albany, NY
	<i>Reticulations</i> , Van Doren Waxter, New York, NY
	James Harris Gallery, Seattle, WA
2016	<i>Cameron Martin/Molly Zuckerman-Hartung</i> , The Suburban, Milwaukee, WI
	Galerie Nikolaus Ruzicska (project room), Salzburg, Austria
2014	James Harris Gallery, Seattle, WA
2012	Galerie Nikolaus Ruzicska, Salzburg, Austria
2011	<i>Bracket</i> , Greenberg Van Doren Gallery, New York, NY
2009	<i>Ski Dubai</i> , The Suburban, Oak Park, IL
2008	Gallery Min Min, Tokyo, Japan
	Galerie Nikolaus Ruzicska, Salzburg, Austria
2007	<i>Eclipse</i> , Greenberg Van Doren Gallery, New York, NY
	Eleven Rivington, New York, NY
2006	<i>Focus 3: Cameron Martin</i> , Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa, OK
	<i>Currents 97: Cameron Martin</i> , Saint Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, MO
2005	<i>Works on Paper</i> , Greenberg Van Doren Gallery, New York, NY
	<i>Law of Ruins</i> , G Fine Art, Washington, D.C.
2004	<i>A Turn Pale</i> , Gallery Min Min, Tokyo, Japan
	<i>Clear Skies</i> , Artemis Greenberg Van Doren Gallery, New York, NY

2003	<i>Never Rider</i> , Gallery Min Min, Tokyo, Japan
2002	<i>Standstill</i> , Artemis Greenberg Van Doren Gallery, New York, NY
2001	<i>New Paintings</i> , Kevin Bruk Gallery, Miami, FL
2000	<i>Cameron Martin</i> , Angstrom Gallery, Dallas, TX
1999	<i>Future Views</i> , Tate, New York, NY
	<i>The Future Lasts Forever</i> , Howard House, Seattle, WA

	Selected Group Exhibitions
2016	<i>Foundation Barbin Presents: Redux (Sort of)</i> , Kai Matsumiya Gallery, New York, NY
2015	<i>sorry, i've been trying to teach a peacock how to act</i> , Rachel Uffner Gallery, New York, NY
2014	<i>Fixing a Hole</i> , Koenig and Clinton, New York, NY
	<i>Delusion/Illusion</i> , Galleri Haaken, Oslo, Norway
2013	<i>White House</i> , Galerie Clemens Gunzer, Zurich, Switzerland
2012	<i>25 Years of Tandem Press</i> , Chazen Museum, Madison, WI
2011	<i>Mythos Berg</i> , RLB Kunstbruecke, Innsbruck, Austria
	<i>Highpoint Editions—Decade One</i> , Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis, MN
	<i>Reclaimed</i> , Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA
	<i>Surveyor</i> , Albright Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY
2010	<i>Art on Paper Biennial</i> , Weatherspoon Art Museum, Greensboro, NC
	<i>roundabout</i> , City Gallery, Wellington, New Zealand, traveled to the Tel Aviv Museum, Tel Aviv, Israel
2009	<i>Uncharted</i> , University Art Museum, University at Albany, SUNY, Albany, NY
	<i>Infinitesimal Eternity: Images Made in the Face of Spectacle</i> , Yale School of Art, New Haven, CT
2007	<i>In Monet's Garden</i> , Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus, OH, traveled to the Musée Marmottan, Paris, France

2006	<i>Ruth Root, Alex Brown, Cameron Martin, Sally Ross</i> , Gallery Min Min, Tokyo, Japan
	<i>Pop and After</i> , Saint Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, MO
2005	<i>Short Stories: Contemporary Selections</i> , Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, WA
2004	<i>Whitney Biennial</i> , Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY
2002	<i>Contemporary Art Project Collection</i> , Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA
	<i>Guide to Trust No. 2</i> , Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA
2000	<i>3ness</i> , Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium
	<i>Shifting Ground: Transformed Views of the American Landscape</i> , Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, WA

	Awards
2010	John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship
2008	Joan Mitchell Foundation Fellowship
2006	Steep Rock Arts Residency, Washington, CT
2005	Freund Fellowship, Washington University, St. Louis, MO
2001	Artists at Giverny Fellowship and Residency, Giverny, France
2000	Pollock-Krasner Foundation Award

	Collections
	Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, MA
	Albright Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY
	Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH
	Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, WA
	Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis, MN
	Philbrook Museum, Tulsa, OK
	Saint Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, MO
	Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA
	University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI
	U.S. State Department Art Bank Program, Washington, DC
	Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY

All paintings courtesy of the artist, Van Doren Waxter, New York, and James Harris Gallery, Seattle, except *Chapter*, 2014, generously loaned by Andrea van Beuren and Roger Kass.

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– C. M.

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