

Morgan Presents

Cora Cohen: Works from the 1980's
September 15th—October 18th, 2022
155 Suffolk Street, New York, NY 10002



These works were overlooked in their time and I believe they, and Cora Cohen, deserve to be looked at with fresh eyes. They are, first and foremost, great paintings and I hope you get the chance to come and see them in person.

*Sincerely,
Morgan*

While Cora Cohen's works are supremely concerned with the maintenance and integrity of the internal logic of each painting, they care little for larger conceptual systems or groupings. In this body of work from the 1980's, Cohen calibrates compositional structure, form and color, all in the service of a larger investigation of weight and weightlessness in painting.

Cohen interweaves washed, almost watery grounds and built up impasto reserves of color, with varying ration and calibration in each picture. Within these impasto regions, which in *Untitled* constitutes the entire work, paint is applied with an assertive intentionality; somewhat reminiscent of Hedda Sterne's New York series of the 1950's, or perhaps in dialogue with Cohen's friend and colleague Joan Mitchell's abstract landscapes. Cohen's washed grounds of color counter Helen Frankenthaler's open expanses, which depended upon the imagination of the viewer for their empowerment, as even Cohen's washier brushstrokes convey a gesture of expression and touch. Cohen treats both lighter and heavier moments with the same courtesy and dignity: her exploration encompasses both weighty and weightless moments in painting.

Cohen's aforementioned refutation of systems and conceptual frameworks across works stands in favor of an embrace of material, with all its qualities and constraints. The materiality of paint is the primary instrument through which Cohen's investigation occurs. In a Hyperallegic interview, Cohen states "I am always skeptical of the notion of attributing thinking to movements. Artists have ideas, and tend to phase in and out of movements."¹ Yet this interest in ideas should not be taken to isolate Cohen's painting from its dialogue with a viewer—moments of mass, gravity and levity are all understood through the prism of spatial experience and the elicitation of sensation in a viewer. Each picture thereby implies a dialogue with a corporeal body, external to the work itself.

Cohen concludes "Although I don't know formalism on any deep art critical level, I do know that it has been utilized to remove a sense of the world from the practice of painting, and has enabled the consideration of a painting as an autonomous object, often outside of any social system. I refute this obliquely and explicitly." The artist's prioritization of a visual experience allows each painting to serve as a bridge between paint as material and the viewer in space—it is up to us to cross this bridge.

Cora Cohen (b. 1943, Manhattan, NY) lives and works in Long Island City, NY. Cohen's first major solo exhibition was held at the Everson Museum of Art in 1974. Cohen's work is in the permanent collection of multiple institutions including: the Swedish State Arts Council, Stockholm; The Ulla and Heiner Pietzsch Collection, Berlin; the Weatherspoon Art Museum, Greensboro; The William and Uytendale Scott Memorial Study Collection of Works by Women of The Bryn Mawr College Art and Archaeology Collection, Bryn Mawr; Yale University, New Haven; and the Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase.

Cohen is the recipient of a 2013 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship Award. Her other previous honors include grants from the NEA (1987), the New York Foundation for the Arts (1989), the Gottlieb Foundation (1990, 2006), The Pollock/Krasner Foundation Award (1998), a Yaddo Residency (1982), The Marie Walsh Sharpe Foundation Space Program Residency (2008-2009), and The Edward F. Albee Foundation Residency (2009).

Cohen received her B.A. (1964) and M.A. (1972) from Bennington College, where she studied with Paul Feeley and Lawrence Alloway. She has lectured and taught at various institutions including the New York Studio School, Maryland Institute College of Art, Columbia University's School of the Arts, and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago amongst others.

¹ Sam Jablon, The Formative Formlessness of Cora Cohen, Hyperallegic: August 22nd 2013, <https://hyperallegic.com/80124/the-formative-formlessness-of-cora-cohen/>

Morgan Presents is a New York exhibition space founded and directed by Morgan Aguiar-Lucander, an independent curator, writer, dealer, and advisor to both artists and collectors.

Morgan Presents invites pairs of artists to create an exhibition that offers a new perspective into their practice. Morgan Presents is not a representing gallery, and no one artist will exhibit twice during the run of the program. Morgan Presents intends to offer an insight into today's emerging vanguard of painting and sculpture in collaboration and dialogue with established artists and galleries both domestically and abroad. A hardback publication, cataloguing each exhibition, will be published at the conclusion of the project. The curatorial program will be presented out of 155 Suffolk Street in Manhattan, commencing from September 2021.