



CATHERINE HOWE:
STUDIO VISIT





Catherine Howe

Ultra-Florescent

Catherine Howe's 'Ultra – Florescent' continues the New York-based painter's fascination with the tactile materiality of painting through a series of glistening, silvery paintings that interrogate the static surface as a malleable entity. Comprised of eight paintings with names derived from flowers and butterflies, the new body of work intensifies Howe's historic usage of mica powders in acrylic mediums underneath thick matte white.





“These new works initially appear to be white on white under diffuse lighting, but as light conditions change or the viewer changes position, the paintings’ deeply layered grounds alter, showing luminous colors that shift when seen from different angles showing a lustrous glimpse of opalescent hues.”

— Catherine Howe

The initial layering of these self-described alchemical ‘interference’ pigments creates a slippery backdrop for the eye to gleefully wander in confusion; nearly impossible to photograph, Howe’s compositions radiate surprisingly complex colors as one walks around, or as light manipulates space throughout an afternoon. Whitish blues permute to bronze and then green, just as the more grounding, ivory brushstrokes that create floral impressions sink between foreground and background.



“The figure/ground relationship is in flux, depending on the lighting conditions. For instance, in low light, the ground may come forward and the relief painting may appear to recede.” — Catherine Howe



“I employ brushes, ceramic tools and homemade custom mark-makers. A painting is no mere static image, but an imprint of action and agency.” — Catherine Howe

Howe's paintings invoke the gesture at its most elemental, as a visage made in precise spontaneity. As previous critical essays have noted, Howe's technical prowess (she is currently a graduate painting professor at the New York Academy of Art) allows her to engage with historically luxurious notions of expressionism while toying with the lineage of grandiloquence in painting. Her whimsical renderings of flora become as much about the content and its application as the ghostly half-life of form and its shifting sense of depth and light— elusive and yet nearly palpable, like water through your hands.





“Light upon the natural world may reveal and conceal in unexpected ways— I envision these works as mysteriously illuminated to the point of being blanched of local color— a garden in moonlight shows no red on the rose. Silhouette and sensuous forms prevail. They evoke liminal states of being. In between memory and slumber, the sun illuminates the day-dreamer’s shuttered eyes.” — Catherine Howe



Catherine Howe's *Ultra-Florescent* is on view at Winston Wachter Fine Art Seattle from September 6th to October 21st.

