

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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***Liane Ricci & Barbara Strasen:  
Two Solo Exhibitions***

February 27 - April 9, 2020



Opening Reception: Thursday, February 27, 6-8pm

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Susan Eley Fine Art is delighted to present two solo shows featuring recent paintings by **Liane Ricci**, from Chapel Hill, NC, and **Barbara Strasen**, based in Los Angeles, CA. Ricci is represented by over a dozen abstract paintings on wood panel and a custom, hand-painted wall mural in the South Gallery; and Strasen with eight mixed media paintings on Yupo in the North Gallery.

Both artists have participated in solo and group exhibitions, as well as in art fairs with SEFA. The exhibition opens with an Artists' Reception on Thursday, February 27, 6-8 pm, and remains on view through April 9, 2020.

## **LIANE RICCI**

Liane Ricci's abstract paintings defy categorization. They are based in geometry and largely composed of bold lines dissecting and running alongside shapes, yet there is nothing linear or analytical about them. A lyricism and feminine grace permeate each painting. Bits of smoky, blurred color bleed across edges; drips soften flattened color fields and a general tonal sfumato pervades these new paintings.

The contrast in surface quality and the movement between linear elements tracing and sometimes hugging angular forms, keep the eye moving around in a type of carefully choreographed visual dance.

Ricci is a colorist; deeply interested in the relationships between colors placed side by side and the ensuing emotions and reactions that it can elicit. She is also intrigued by the play of line against solid form and how the two together create a visual tension.

All 13 paintings in the exhibition were created in the past year. The excitement and dynamism in each one is palpable. In *Median*, Ricci chooses a square format that evokes a kind of landscape, with large circular forms to evoke boulders, under earth-toned areas that could be construed as fields or mountains. Yet we are brought back to the surface as a flat element, and not a scene with perspective, by the dissecting red line and blue triangular form that move boldly across the panel.

In *Viaduct*, the yellow, blue and gray areas harmonize consummately; and the black comb like form seems to wrap itself around the central geometric shape, creating the visual surprise and tension, so characteristic of this series. In *Early Apex*, ribbon-like lines circulate around the painting, breaking up the large triangular forms and keeping the eye swirling around the composition.

## **ARTIST BIO**

Liane Ricci was born in Sleepy Hollow, NY and received her art education in New York City at the Art Students League of New York, the School of Visual Arts, the Fashion Institute of Technology and in Connecticut at the Hartford Art School. In 2002, Liane began showing her paintings in galleries in Brooklyn, and soon acquired representation by Susan Eley Fine Art, in Manhattan. Major artworks include commissioned paintings for the Four Seasons Villas, prints for The MGM Grand City Center Las Vegas, painted corsets for Disney's *The Lion King* on Broadway, and a specially-made sculpture for the Fabergé Big Egg Hunt, hosted by Sotheby's.

In 2006 Ricci moved to Culver City, California, and began creating custom artwork for the luxury interiors market, showcased in the La Cienega Design Quarter of West Los Angeles. Her collaborations have included rugs and fabric for Anthony Monaco, custom furniture finishes for Formations, and gold leafing for Dennis & Leen.

During the summer of 2016, Ricci studied traditional fresco painting in Vittorio Veneto, Italy; leading to the launch of RICCI STUDIO, blending old-world techniques with contemporary aesthetics. Currently, she resides in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and continues to explore a variety of techniques in multiple disciplines, using the highest levels of craftsmanship and a commitment to integrity in design.

## **ARTIST STATEMENT**

I'm fascinated by color relationships and the tension between form and line in painting. An alluring use of color can invigorate and emphasize a fanciful quality, creating works that are both timeless and contemporary. With this current series, I explore opposites in structure; while color and shape may reference 1960s Modern Art and the age of Pop painting, playful brushwork pays homage to more Abstract Expressionist traditions. I use areas of block color and precise lines against drips and paint-rolling techniques, playing with rigid graphic themes alongside more fluid, intuitive ones. I want the eye to travel, finding areas of rest and chaos alike.

## BARBARA STRASEN

Barbara Strasen creates imagery plumbed from the depths of a fertile imagination and a trove of rich memories, in combination with signs, symbols and pictures inspired by advertising, TV, film, signage, billboards, magazines, medical texts and other sources. No image is dismissed as banal or unimportant. It is all important to Strasen, in a kind of hyper-democratic reflection of the insanely complex visual world we inhabit as denizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Given this diverse source material, one might think that Strasen's paintings—acrylic, ink and collage on Yupo paper—would read as chaotic or unsettling. On the contrary, she finds the flow and lyricism amidst a complex layering of disparate imagery.

In the painting *Deconstructed*, Strasen seems to have taken a Rococo painting from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, shaken it up and re-dispersed its elements. The essential components of a landscape—trees, tufts of grass, blue sky and clouds—are rearranged, topsy turvy, with the figures from the narrative still largely central, in tact and attempting to finish what appears to be an afternoon picnic.

Grapes, flowers, birds, a modern cruise liner, a starfish, a pair of bikini-clad sunbathers and figures clothed as if they have stepped out of Fragonard painting, all inhabit the painting *Rococo Modo*. Despite the random, unconnected objects sharing space, harmony rules. With a brilliant and intuitive sense of color, Strasen combines washes of shades that act at once as backdrop and connective tissue for the imagery.

In *Tide Tea*, a large black and white graphic of a stylized wave—reminiscent of Hokusai's famous wave—dominates the composition, replete with floating tea pots and beautiful silhouettes of birds, flying against a background painted with rich blue and deep red.

## ARTIST BIO

Barbara Strasen was born in Brooklyn, raised in the New York area and lives in Los Angeles. She received a BFA from Carnegie-Mellon University and an MFA from the University of California at Berkeley. Strasen has exhibited extensively in Europe and the US since 1977, achieved numerous public commissions, acted as curator for several exhibitions and has taught at the University of California at San Diego.

Museum exhibitions include the Whitney Museum, New York; Santa Barbara Museum of Art; PS 1 MoMA, New York City; Fisher Museum of USC, Los Angeles; Islip Art Museum, East Islip, NY; Long Beach Art Museum, Los Angeles; San Diego Natural History Museum, and Allen Art Museum of Oberlin College, among others.

Strasen has recently been awarded a prestigious City of Los Angeles Artist Fellowship Award, and a recent large commission titled *Flow & Glimpse*, fills the ticketing and departure levels of Los Angeles World Airport's Terminal 2.

## **ARTIST STATEMENT**

I am a visual artist whose work is about finding beauty and harmony in the turbulence and complexity of apparently unrelated and contradictory images. My perennial focus is on finding unexpected visual connections between seemingly unlike images and ideas, and to discover new relationships between them. The sources of these images are wide-ranging, from the anthropology of nonwestern cultures to the biology of neural systems, and from natural history to cosmology and the Big Bang.

Every act of perception involves multiple levels of awareness: the perception itself, memories associated with the perception, and associations invoked by these perceptions. These perceptions and memories layer themselves in some form of priority, and do not remain constant but are the result of a continuing process of perception and re-perception, the mind constantly trying to reconcile the sublime with the horrific, the trivial with the vital.

My art deals with this by using successive layers of imagery, both visual and physical. I have always been driven to make art that comments upon and represents these ideas, seeking to reveal the interconnectedness of all things.

Over time I have taken different approaches to manifesting this vision, pushing the boundaries of painting, photography and printmaking, and exploring other media to create multi-image works that reflect upon these layered complexities. My original artistic medium was painting, which has expanded to include digital artworks, installations, and lenticular works. The result has been a variety of work, from gallery-sized paintings, prints and singular artworks to huge installations for a building lobby and an airport terminal.