



*tbt*, 2019. Oil on linen, 48 x 60in.

## **Jackie Gendel** *Stained Glass Cliff*

February 21 - April 6, 2019

Opening reception: Thursday, February 21, 6-8:30pm

Thomas Erben is very excited to present *Stained Glass Cliff*, a new series of paintings by Jackie Gendel. This is the artist's second solo exhibition with the gallery.

Casting a sense of peril and irony upon Gendel's occasional play with planar and divisionist models of painting, the exhibition's title refers to "glass cliff." The term, coined in 2005 by British professors Michelle K. Ryan and Alexander Haslam, describes a common practice in which women are only promoted to positions of power in times of crisis and risk. Gendel's usage charges the expression, suggesting an invisible precipice that mirrors the angularity, transparency, and fragmentary quality found in many of her paintings.

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# Thomas Erben Gallery

A term of bland corporate-world jargon, “glass cliff” nevertheless implies a lurking essentialism that complements if not extends from depictions of women in domestic and maternal spheres; i.e. women as being inherently more capable of cleaning up the mess, accepting blame or responsibility, or diffusing organizational and cultural failures-themselves often attributable to failures of masculinity—with their supposedly innate “nurturing” difference of perspective.

In this new series of work from Gendel, the paintings allegorizes their own making. Cared for, messed-with, messed-up, elegant, and sometimes flailing into existence, they foreground their limitations and possibilities in depiction, color, and material, and, in doing so, implicate the role of the painter and viewer in an unfolding narrative that never quite folds. At the same time, Gendel’s narrative digs deeper, hinting at a perverse historicity of painting and such tropes as the “new woman” and the “fallen woman.”

In many ways, Gendel’s work remains what it has long been (mysterious, evocative, allusive) and yet its play with painting’s patterned histories and compulsive repetition - both in material and as representation - seems more redolent of this moment when so much that seems within reach also seems precarious. Bringing together an increasingly complex web of references and approaches, *Stained Glass Cliff* further enriches Gendel’s nuanced and mingled exploration of style, narrative, history, and the social life of painting.

**Jackie Gendel** (b. 1973, Houston, TX) received her BA from Washington University, St. Louis, in 1996 and her MFA from Yale University in 1998. Her work was first seen at this gallery in the group exhibition *Painting Forward* (2016). Since 2000, she has participated in numerous group shows, including *A New Subjectivity: Figurative Painting after 2000* and a two-person presentation with Dona Nelson at Art Basel Miami Beach (both 2017). Gendel’s solo exhibitions include shows with Jeff Bailey, New York (2013, 2012, 2010, 2006); Loyal Gallery, Malmö (2012); Moti Hasson, New York (2008); and *Mixture Contemporary Art*, Houston (2004, 2002). Reviews of her work have appeared in *Modern Painters*, *Artforum*, *New York Times*, *Art in America*, *New Yorker*, *Brooklyn Rail*, *Art Papers*, and *Hyperallergic*. The American Academy of Arts and Letters awarded her an Academy Award in 2007. She participated in the Marie Walsh Sharpe Space Program in 2010 and was an artist-in-residence at the MacDowell Colony in 2005. Gendel lives and works in Providence, Rhode Island.

Michelle K. Ryan and S. Alexander Haslam, (2005). *The Glass Cliff: Evidence that Women are Over-Represented in Precarious Leadership Positions*. *British Journal of Management*.