

Thomas Erben Gallery



Janice Nowinski New Work

April 13 – May 27, 2023

Opening reception: Thursday, April 13, 6 - 8:30pm

Thomas Erben is very excited to present *New Work*, **Janice Nowinski's** second exhibition after her breakthrough 2021 show, which drew wide praise and critical support. Continuing her use of formats as small as 5 x 7 in. – an aspect that initially “outraged” Katherine Bradford (*Artists’ Artists*, Artforum Dec. 2021) – Nowinski now deepens her engagement with color and broadens her pictorial space. These paintings evoke a sense of scale that defies their size and packs a material punch that requires attentive unpacking, visual as well as intellectual.

The artist usually starts from a found photograph, which can be rather generic and often carries scant information, using it for multiple paintings with rather different results. This relationship to source material is emblematic of her process, in which a visual “event” triggers her interest and incites the development of the work, propelling it beyond the initial impulse. This is also one of the methods Nowinski uses to evade the historical weight of her medium, letting each painting do its own thing, to the extent that she often surprises herself.

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Time appears to collapse on the surfaces of these works, as their size allows the artist to cover them in a few, seemingly effortless strokes. The result is a dynamic interplay of jostling lines, expanses and daubs of paint, which coalesce into one specific moment and would require a complete reconfiguration should any element shift even minutely. Despite their seeming nonchalance, the paintings exude authority both through their formal structure and a clarity achieved via multiple drafts, kept private by the artist but still present in the richness of each surface shown.

The barely rendered, scrawled faces of Nowinski's mostly female nudes lend an air of disconcerted content to their splayed bodies. Their expressions have a charmingly comic, even slapdash quality, disrupting any visual connection to the eroticism or heroism associated with traditional nudes. These figures are assembled from distinctly individual brush marks, each following its own logic, which form an anatomically implausible though pictorially convincing whole.

The longer we spend with each work, the more Nowinski's deep yet irreverent familiarity with her medium becomes evident. Hers is an art which reinvigorates painting itself, with a directness that eliminates the need for validation through any external discourse.

Janice Nowinski was born 1959 in Manhattan and grew up in Rockaway Park, Queens. She received her MFA in Painting from Yale University in 1987.

Her 2021 show was reviewed twice in **Artforum** (Katherine Bradford and Charity Coleman), twice in **Hyperallergic** (John Yau and Jennifer Samet), **The Hudson Review** (Karen Wilkin), **Painting Perceptions** (John Goodrich) as well as **Two Coats of Paint** (Sangram Majumdar) and paintings were then included in surveys at **Venus Over Manhattan** and **DC Moore Gallery** (both New York).

Nowinski's work was previously included in exhibitions at the **American Academy of Arts and Letters**, **National Academy Museum**, **American University Museum**, **Zurcher Gallery**, and **Steven Harvey Fine Arts Projects**. She was awarded a **Guggenheim Fellowship** in 2022 and is a **Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program awardee** for 2022/23. The artist lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.