



# SKIRTING THE LINE

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Painting Between Abstraction and Representation



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March 14 - September 20, 2020

Meghan Brady

Inka Essenhigh

Tracy Miller

Anne Neely

Hannah Secord Wade

Curated by Bethany Engstrom



MEGHAN BRADY, *FEVERDREAM*, 2020, INSTALLATION VIEW

## FOREWORD

The year 2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment, which guarantees and protects women's constitutional right to vote. In recognition of this historic centennial, arts organizations across the country are celebrating the work of women artists.

CMCA's contribution is the exhibition, *Skirting the Line*, organized by our Associate Curator, Bethany Engstrom. It gathers together the work of five contemporary women painters—Meghan Brady, Inka Essenhigh, Tracy Miller, Anne Neely, and Hannah Secord Wade.

The exhibition demonstrates the range and diversity these five artists bring to the age-old medium of painting. Employing different techniques to create new forms of landscape, still life, and the figure, each artist uses a unique, but cohesive, visual language in her work. In doing so, each explores what it means to portray a subject by discovering the interplay between abstraction and representation.

Suzette McAvoy  
CMCA Executive Director



## MEGHAN BRADY

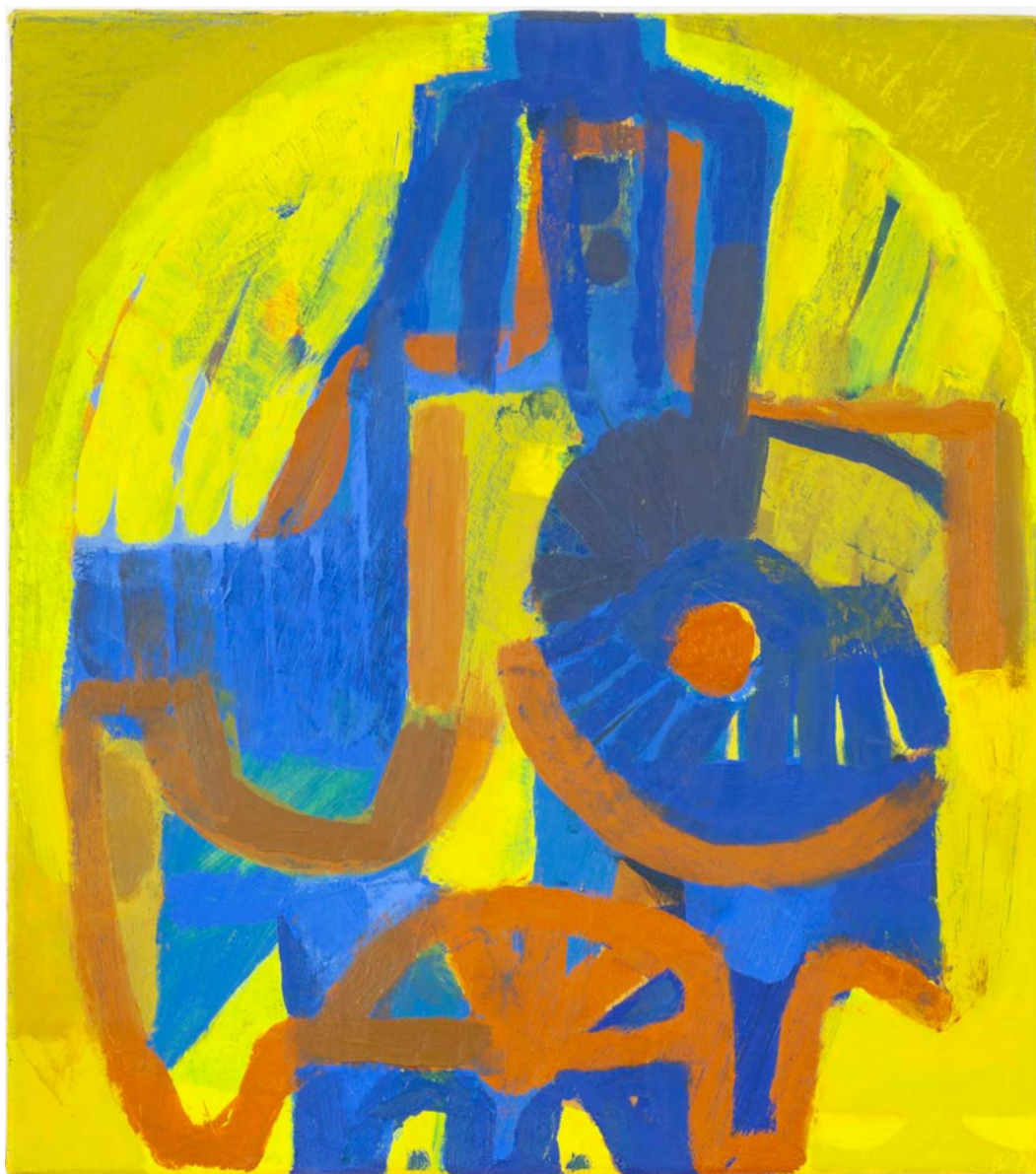
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In the summer of 2018, artist Meghan Brady left her modest garage studio in Camden, Maine, where she had been working for ten years, for a large, high-ceilinged space in a former elementary school in Rockland, as part of a six-month residency supported by the Ellis-Beauregard Foundation.

The sheer size of the new studio was transformative for her, enabling her to work on a scale and in a manner that was completely new to her. She began painting and collaging a series of boldly colored, wall-sized paintings on paper that she made on the floor.

Speaking of this new working method, she says, “I had a backlog of painting ideas that I wanted to get out of my head as a way to loosen up other work. I found it liberating to work on a temporary, unfussy surface that I could reshape on an impulse.”

Since returning to her old studio, the changes wrought by the residency have continued to inform her paintings. Even now, working again on traditional stretched canvases, she says, “I feel the same but completely different, like a tourist who has traveled and then come home.”



*HONEY*, 2019, OIL ON CANVAS, 18 X 16 INCHES



AM / EYE-SPY, 2019, OIL ON CANVAS, 18 X 16 INCHES





*MOTHERWORD*, 2018, OIL ON CANVAS, 16 X 14 INCHES





*BELLS*, 2018, OIL ON CANVAS, 18 X 16 INCHES

Meghan Brady received her BA from Smith College and her MFA from Boston University. She was a recipient of a 2017 and 2019 Ellis Beauregard Foundation Grant, a 2018 Hewnoaks Summer Fellowship, and a 2019 MacDowell Colony Fellowship. Her work was recently featured in a solo exhibition, Reversible Roles at the University of Maine Museum of Art, Bangor, ME. Other recent exhibitions include Steel House Projects, Rockland, ME; Perimeter Gallery, Belfast, ME; Portland Museum of Art, Portland, ME; Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects, NYC; Mrs., Maspeth, NY; and Tiger Strikes Asteroid, Brooklyn, NY, which received a mention by The New York Times. Brady lives and works in Camden, ME.

## INKA ESSENHIGH

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Inka Essenhigh is widely known for her sensuous, dreamlike paintings that translate her encounters with, and intuitions about, contemporary society into haunting, playful, and sometimes disturbing visual scenes.

Her immaculately crafted paintings are marked by her undulating line and seductive, richly colored surfaces.

Many of her works begin with imagery drawn from the wooded landscape around her studio in St. George, Maine, and couple with scenes of the urban environment around her home and studio in New York City.

The nine panels of her large work, *Fragments from a nature cult, 2087, C.E.* are fractured pieces of a single scene, rich with lush vegetation and punctuated by the human figure—a hand, a foot, a small face peaking from behind a petal.

As critic Robert Archambeau writes, “The fragmentary nature of the image suggests that something terrible has happened to it...Utopia, it seems, is fragile.”





*THE BLAZING WORLD*, 2019, ENAMEL ON CANVAS, 60 X 84 INCHES



*FRAGMENTS FROM A NATURE CULT*, 2087, C.E., 2019, ENAMEL ON CANVAS, 9 PANELS, 192 INCHES WIDE



*FRAGMENTS FROM A NATURE CULT, 2087, C.E., 2019, ENAMEL ON CANVAS, DETAIL*





*FRAGMENTS FROM A NATURE CULT, 2087, C.E., 2019, ENAMEL ON CANVAS, DETAIL*

Inka Essenhigh received her BFA from Columbus College of Art & Design and her MFA from School of Visual Arts New York City. Her work has been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions throughout the country and internationally, including recently at the Susquehanna Art Museum, Harrisburg, PA; Kavi Gupta Gallery, Chicago, IL; Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art, Virginia Beach, VA; Jacob Lewis Gallery, NYC; Columbus College of Art & Design, Canzani Center, Columbus, OH; Tomio Koyama Gallery, Tokyo, Japan; and Pace Prints, NYC. Her work is included in the permanent collections of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO; Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami, FL; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA; Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA; Tate Modern, London, England; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY. Essenhigh lives and works in New York, NY and St. George, ME.

## TRACY MILLER

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Tracy Miller is a New York painter who spends summers in Downeast Maine. She is best known for her joyful, allover still life paintings that incorporate a cacophony of brightly colored, familiar objects ranging from pineapples and layer cakes to teapots and beer cans. They are a democratic cornucopia of high and low, abundance and decadence, that speaks to our era of rampant consumerism.

In contrast to traditional still life paintings that are formally and statically composed, Miller's paintings toy with composition and perspective. She employs a range of expressive mark making, resulting in dizzying arrangements that appear to shift and move around the canvas.

As critic Lilly Lampe has written, Miller is one of few contemporary artists "injecting freshness into a storied tradition [and] bringing the historically devalued genre of still life painting into the 21st century."





*DOUBLE BUBBLE*, 2016, OIL ON CANVAS, 60 X 60 INCHES



*TWISTER*, 2019, OIL ON CANVAS, 72 X 60 INCHES





QUESTION MARK, 2018, OIL ON CANVAS, 60 X 60 INCHES





CARTWHEEL, 2017, OIL ON CANVAS, 72 X 72 INCHES

Tracy Miller was born in Storm Lake, IA, and studied at the University of Iowa, the University of California at Berkeley, and Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. Her work has been included in nine solo shows and more than fifty group shows throughout the U.S., including a solo exhibition at the American University Museum in 2013. She is the recipient of a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, three Pollock-Krasner Awards, an Elizabeth Foundation Award, a Marie Walsh Sharpe Art Foundation Grant, and an American Academy of Arts and Letters purchase prize. Miller lives and works in Brooklyn, NY, and spends summers in Harrington, ME.

## ANNE NEELY

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Artist Anne Neely splits her time between studios in Boston, Massachusetts, and Jonesport, Maine. Throughout her work of the past two decades, she has cast nature in the primary role. The self, while present, has been expressed through a profound concern for, and connection to, the natural world—in particular, her devotion to environmental issues affecting water.

Now, in her latest body of work—a selection of which is shown in this exhibition— Neely adopts a radically different stance. Rather than looking outward, she is now looking within. For the first time, she is turning her keen sense of observation upon herself, mining her internal landscape of memory and emotion. Collectively, these paintings function as icons and meditations, each a page in the artist's book of hours.

Threading through the works is the motif of the grid, or more precisely, the net — for the horizontal and vertical lines scratched into the painted surfaces are irregular and fluid, more porous than supportive. Still, they give Neely a structure to hang her painterly hat on.





CYPHER, 2017, OIL ON LINEN, 14 X 11 INCHES





SWEET SORROW, 2016, OIL ON LINEN, 14 X 11 INCHES



*THE SCREAM*, 2017, OIL ON LINEN, 14 X 11 INCHES





*HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT*, 2016, OIL ON LINEN, 14 X 11 INCHES

Anne Neely received her BA from Old Dominion University. She has been awarded residencies at the Millay Colony for the Arts, the Ballinglen Arts Foundation, and the Cill Rialaig Arts Center. Her work was recently featured in a solo exhibition at CUE Art Foundation, NYC—curated by Sarah Sze—and a solo exhibition, *Water Stories* at the Museum of Science, Boston. Other recent exhibitions include Cove Street Arts, Portland, ME, and Lohin Geduld Gallery, NYC, as well as numerous additional venues throughout the U.S. Her work can be found in the collections of the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; the Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY; the Davis Museum, Wellesley, MA; the Rose Art Museum, Waltham, MA; the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, MA; the Farnsworth Art Museum, Rockland, ME; Grunwald Center for Graphic Art, UCLA; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY. She splits her time between homes and studios in Jonesport, ME, and Boston, MA.



## HANNAH SECORD WADE

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Hannah Secord Wade's beautifully modulated pastel-colored paintings belie themes of fear, frustration, and lack of control over her surroundings. Largely based in landscape, her recent work, *Everything all together*, depicts a series of mountainous piles of vegetation and debris, each pictured in a different state of decay and disarray.

Working in her Woolwich, Maine, studio and almost entirely from her imagination, she describes her work as "representation being eaten by abstraction."

Building up the image intuitively, she allows herself to follow the paint, keeping the marks that are interesting and building off them layer by layer, never quite knowing how a particular painting will turn out. She typically works in oil paint applied in multiple layers over many months, enabling the works to mutate and grow, as imagery is moved, shifted, and ultimately, resolved.



*GRRREETINGS*, 2018, OIL ON CANVAS, 60 X 48 INCHES



*EVERYTHING ALL TOGETHER*, 2016, OIL ON CANVAS, 60 X 48 INCHES



SWAN, 2019, ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 60 X 48 INCHES





*HEARSSST*, 2019, ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 60 X 48 INCHES

Hannah Secord Wade received her BFA from Hampshire College and her MA Fine Art from Chelsea College of Arts. She has been a resident at the Arteles Creative Center, Open Wabi, and The Sam and Adele Golden Foundation. Her work has been featured in various publications including Boooooooooom!, Design Crush, and Style for Mankind. She has recently exhibited in London, Paris, and throughout the United States, in solo exhibitions at Gallery 49 in Portland, ME and Northern Daughters in Vergennes, VT, and selected exhibitions at Buoy Gallery, Kittery, ME, Public Space One, Iowa City, IA, and the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, England. She lives and works in Woolwich, ME.









# EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

## Meghan Brady

*AM / Eye-Spy*, 2019, oil on canvas, 18 x 16 inches  
Courtesy of Fidelity Investments Art Collection

*Bells*, 2018, oil on canvas, 18 x 16 inches  
Courtesy of the artist and Mrs., Maspeth, NY

*Blue + Gold Gardenhead*, 2018, oil on canvas, 16 x 14 inches  
Courtesy of the artist and Mrs., Maspeth, NY

*Feverdream*, 2020, acrylic and collage on paper, 13 x 25 feet  
Courtesy of the artist and Mrs., Maspeth, NY

*Honey*, 2019, oil on canvas, 18 x 16 inches  
Courtesy of the artist and Mrs., Maspeth, NY

*Motherword*, 2018, oil on canvas, 16 x 14 inches  
Courtesy of the artist and Mrs., Maspeth, NY

## Inka Essenhigh

*The Blazing World*, 2019, enamel on canvas, 60 x 84 inches  
Courtesy of the artist and Kavi Gupta, Chicago

*Fragments from a nature cult, 2087, C.E.*, 2019, enamel on canvas, 9 panels, 192 inches wide  
Courtesy of the artist and Kavi Gupta, Chicago

## Tracy Miller

*Cartwheel*, 2017, oil on canvas, 72 x 72 inches  
Courtesy of the artist and Mrs., Maspeth, NY

*Double Bubble*, 2016, oil on canvas, 60 x 60 inches  
Courtesy of the artist and Mrs., Maspeth, NY

*Fish Hook*, 2018, oil on canvas, 72 x 60 inches  
Courtesy of the artist and Mrs., Maspeth, NY

*Twister*, 2019, oil on canvas, 72 x 60 inches  
Courtesy of the artist and Mrs., Maspeth, NY

*Question Mark*, 2018, oil on canvas, 60 x 60 inches  
Courtesy of the artist and Mrs., Maspeth, NY

**Anne Neely**

*After Howard Hodgkin*, 2017, oil on linen, 14 x 11 inches

*Blackbird Fly*, 2017, oil on linen, 14 x 11 inches

*Building Landscape*, 2017, oil on linen, 14 x 11 inches

*Cypher*, 2017, oil on linen, 14 x 11 inches

*Current*, 2017, oil on linen, 14 x 11 inches

*Dynamic Stability*, 2017, oil on linen, 14 x 11 inches

*Fodder*, 2017, oil on linen, 14 x 11 inches

*Ghosts*, 2017, oil on linen, 14 x 11 inches

*Hidden in Plain Sight*, 2016, oil on linen, 14 x 11 inches

*Lessons*, 2017, oil on linen, 80 x 60 inches

*Memory*, 2017, oil on linen, 14 x 11 inches

*Palace*, 2017, oil on linen, 14 x 11 inches

*Portrait of the Artist*, 2016, oil on linen, 14 x 11 inches

*The Scream*, 2017, oil on linen, 14 x 11 inches

*Sweet Sorrow*, 2016, oil on linen, 14 x 11 inches

*Underwing*, 2017, oil on linen, 14 x 11 inches

*Wish*, 2017, oil on linen, 14 x 11 inches

Collection of the artist

**Hannah Secord Wade**

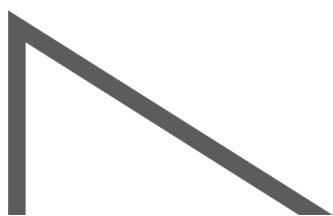
*Dog Fountain*, 2019, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 48 inches

*Everything all together*, 2016, oil on canvas, 60 x 48 inches

*Grrreetings*, 2018, oil on canvas, 60 x 48 inches

*Hearsst*, 2019, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 48 inches

*Swan*, 2019, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 48 inches



Catalog designed by Justine Kablack

Installation images courtesy of Dave Clough Photography (pages 3, 35, 36)

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Cover and back image: Meghan Brady, *Feverdream*, 2020, acrylic and collage on paper, 13 x 25 feet, detail



