

CLAIRE ANNA BAKER
Suspended Wire

September 23 - November 4, 2017



Moskowitz Bayse is pleased to present *Suspended Wire*, an exhibition of new paintings by Claire Anna Baker. The occasion marks the artist's third solo presentation with the gallery.

Claire Anna Baker makes paintings from observation that present as abstractions. She turns gesture on its head; as opposed to quickly or improvisationally executed marks, hers are meditated, calculated, structured, and slow.

In *Suspended Wire*, she directs her attention toward a revisiting of the landscape. As in previous bodies of work, she translates experience in nature into an assemblage-like installation in her studio, referred to as her "source"; for the first time here, the source is suspended from her studio's ceiling. She observes and draws from the source over time, from which she finds the compositional, tonal, and light structures for the paintings.

In agreement, in practice, Baker stands inside our currently most problematic dialectic: the human environment versus the natural one. She works to merge the two environments in real life and in her memory. Then she creates imagery from this merging, working towards an inclusive ecological identity. Of course, as she paints,

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she goes beyond the single dialectic, distilling her experiences into formally-considered paintings. The dance of painting becomes a journey of awareness, touching on other binaries: abstraction/realism; vagueness/likeness; light within painter/light within landscape; dark/light; weight/weightlessness; imagination/fact—and she arrives layer by layer at delicately-threaded connections.

Her conversations are also quietly radical. To paint abstractions and also acknowledge the landscape as source; this can undo—if we think about it—our earlier thinking about abstraction. To use the abstract-expressionist intuitive gesture, but replace their Heroic Search For Truth with art-making as personal practice also unwinds art history more than a little. And to replace ab-ex grandiosity and nihilism with an open-ended inquiry and a yearning to merge with the planet we live on—to admit that we want to joyfully, innocently merge with the love-object—this seems radical to me.¹

Claire Anna Baker (b. 1983, Berkeley, CA) received her MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles in 2008 and her BA from Brown University in 2005. In 2017, her monumental painting *Congruence Is* was acquired by the Rose Art Museum's Sam Hunter Emerging Artists Fund Acquisition Committee. She lives and works in Los Angeles.

Suspended Wire is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue of the same name. The volume includes an interview between Claire Anna Baker and Kim Allen-Niesen, with an essay by Patti Trimble.

¹Trimble, Patti. *Suspended Wire*, Excerpt. Los Angeles, Moskowitz Bayse, 2017.

IMAGE:

Claire Anna Baker, *Untitled*, 2017, Acrylic on polyester, 88 x 50 inches.

GALLERY:

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