

MIGUEL ABREU GALLERY

KATE MOSHER HALL

selected texts & press

KATE MOSHER HALL

The work of Kate Mosher Hall inhabits the charged space of reciprocal looking, activating a locus of estrangement present in any shared visual encounter and amplifying it. Through an interplay of two primary modes of image production—silkscreen printing and painting—she manages to suspend the medium specificities of either address as a way of playfully exploiting the uncertainties inherent to any act of looking. Her images share an elusive, ‘hidden-in-plain-sight’ effect, but one that operates through an unavoidable visual regress: flashes of discernment quickly withdraw into instances of misrecognition. At the same time, visual identifications are retained as hovering or buried afterimages. The experience is akin to both seeing and not seeing at once, stimulating an awareness of looking siloed by the limits of perspectival bias, the strange over-exposure of seeing oneself seeing. The pictures aspire to the status of an image capable of possessing our visual agency not unlike a reflexive hypnosis.

“I use strategies in my work,” says the artist, “to create dynamics of how we look at images or also maybe – how images look back. Some of these strategies are that I print in different resolutions that make different parts of a painting be seen at different proximities so there are different reveals or different timings. I think about hierarchies in an image, for example how a part can be presented or obfuscated and how that changes a viewer’s response to what they are looking at. I am interested in the mechanics of an image.”

Hall’s methods are negatively accumulative, proceeding from various archival image banks through a careful craft of degradation and obfuscation, defamiliarizing a given image in the direction of short-circuiting the primacy of perceptual command. Staging an image at the remote end of our visual field through means of compositional displacement, she constructs vantages that seem to glimpse, as if at the threshold of a lucid dream, a familiar real from an undefinable outside. What her work gathers as a result is a kind of anti – or counter-archive that preserves only the optical realities or spectral residues left over by the hysterical circulation of contemporary cultural media, the psycho-sensory effects underpinning current visual cultures deranged from the objects and environments that enact them.

Material interventions at the level of image production, Hall’s paintings seem to insist, are surrogate procedures for shifting our senses, stimuli for the reconfiguration of our sensual realities capable of transforming the apparently ‘natural’ confines of individual perception.

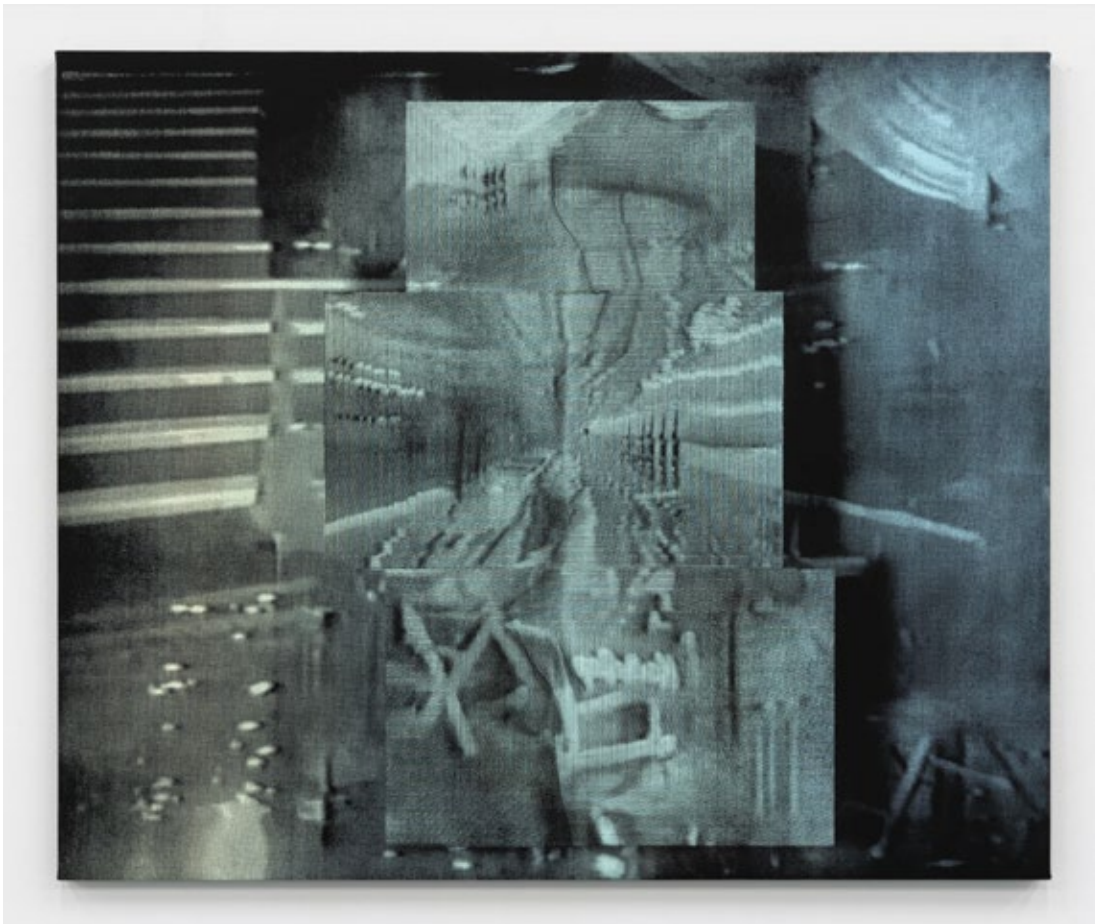
Kate Mosher Hall (b. 1986, Los Angeles) lives and works in Los Angeles. She received her MFA from UCLA in 2020, and her BFA from the California Institute of the Arts in 2013. Solo exhibitions include Blast Beat, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York (2026); Never Odd or Even, Hannah Hoffman Gallery, Los Angeles (2024); Big View, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York (2023); The Reminder, curated by Kristy Trinier, Audain Gallery, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada (2023); Offset, Tanya Leighton, Berlin (2021); Without a body, without Bill, Hannah Hoffman Gallery (2021); LOQK, Artist Curated Projects (2019); and Wind Breaker, Phil Gallery (2019), all in Los Angeles. Notable group exhibitions include Chase a Crooked Shadow: Film Noir as Contemporary Mirror, curated by Alexandra Terry, The Warehouse, Dallas (2026); Kate Mosher Hall, Fionna Connor, and Bedros Yeretzian, Coastal Signs, Auckland, New Zealand (2023); Something or Other, Galerie Maria Bernheim, Zurich (2023); The Painter’s New Tools, curated by Dean Kissick and Eleanor Cayre, Nahmad Contemporary, New York (2022); and K as in Knight, Helena Anrather, New York (2021). Her work is in the permanent collections of Fondation Carmignac (France), Kistefos Museum (Norway), Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Museum of Contemporary Art (Los Angeles), and Rollins Museum of Art (Winter Park).

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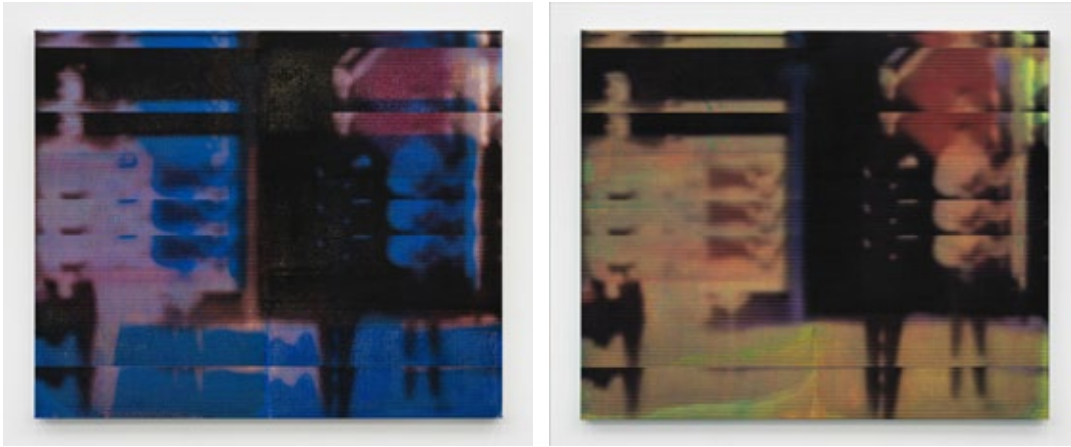
Kate Mosher Hall: Picture as Topography, Image as Scar

JUNE 3, 2026 | QINGYUAN DENG

Kate Mosher Hall's second solo show at Miguel Abreu Gallery spans a violent territory.



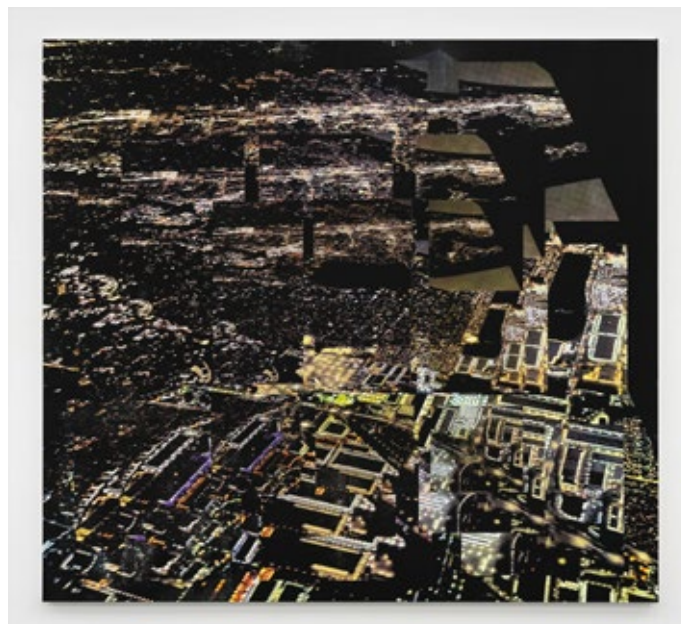
At one pole, *The Ripple* (2026) and *The Rip* (2026) read as corrupted CRT (cathode ray tube) signals. Magenta, blue, and chartreuse scanlines interlace, color diffusing the canvas like a social media feed dropping out from the screen. They are the most emphatically digital pieces in the room. At the other pole, *New Music* (2026) and *Side to side* (2026), which are near-monochrome gray paintings where the image emerges as an embossed relief in the surface of the paint itself, implores you to look at the canvas almost edgewise to register that anything is there. Both sets of paintings enact picture as topography, image as scar.



There is also *Air* (2026), one of the largest paintings in the show, which features a photograph of Los Angeles taken during a night flight descent, tiled back onto itself, the fragments of the same view rotated and overlaid until the illuminated grid of streets and freeways breaks open along the dark angular seams where one screen layer cuts into another. The coherent god's-eye view splits along matte olive-gray planes, redacted and incised. Blacked-out zones recall the no-data gap of the satellite composite. The ground multiplies and shakes until no stable horizon survives: pure vertigo. This is not the sublime aerial expanse. It is the body of the land re-cut, made of scars.

Even *1440 Degrees* (2026) and *15-17 mph* (2026), both black-and-white perspectival hallucinations with strong vanishing points, push the show toward Op art before pulling it back into the high-gain grain of low-light CCTV.

The show's title, "Blast Beat," is a drummer's term lifted from hardcore punk and grindcore. Referring to a single stroke alternated between kick and snare at the edge of what the hand can sustain, fast enough that the individual beats dissolve into one undifferentiated roar, blast beat could also mean Hall's velocity of image production here: pushing the countable image past its threshold until pixel thickens into compounded surface. We spoke shortly after the opening about the afterlife of punk and the digital death drive.



Qingyuan Deng: The title feels like a structural metaphor for the show. “Blast beat” is a metal term, [for a] a very dense grid of notes with a distinct tonal register. And there’s the metaphor of halftone, of resolving and dissolving. There’s the connection between silkscreen as a technique and that music metaphor. Maybe we can start there.

Kate Mosher Hall: I have a music background, and with drumming there was a lot of being in the grid. Then I was thinking about other expressions to be had outside of the grid, how the registration of speed and force perceived through a blast beat works, the quantity of hits. What does that make? There’s this feeling of intensity, of overwhelm, some sort of reaction that’s around heaviness or affect – an emotional thing. So it’s something around taking the grid and how it becomes another cadence or relationship based off the change of time.

QD: There’s also the connection to cinema in the show. I was thinking about the Ken Jacobs work (*Other Urban Lives*, 2023) – that constant flickering, the idea of making cinema almost sculptural. How do you see your painting in relation to cinema?

KMH: I’m actually more familiar with Thom Andersen, who is a collaborator and peer of Ken’s. I took his film history courses as an undergrad, and my relationship to cinema started there, working in black and white, in this way of structuring a scene very specifically. That director’s point of view, that hierarchy of space, the way of building light and darkness even within the field of a painting to construct and think about narrative – a lot of that came from studying early cinema, and the strategies of early cinema.

What is on or left behind, the mystery or allure, the way you build up anticipation – those are still early strategies that carry over into the newer work. We have such a relationship to repetition and touch through image consumption. It’s a conditioning that happens in our minds, but it can also become overwhelming. Having it be in stasis, still as a painting, allows you to sit with the idea of quantity in this other way.

QD: There’s a question of analog here too, because halftone is associated with early mass media such as photography and newspapers. You’re almost using halftone to not communicate so clearly. You’re interested in those stressors of accumulation, of layering, almost reversing the function of halftone, alienating it. How do you think about your painting in relation to those analog technologies?

KMH: I got into printmaking because of the music background, and it was a practice based in community, like having an open studio. Through time I became really invested in this process. Then I asked myself why I am doing silk-screening. I realized it’s how I’m navigating images at the scale that I am, and I can’t really imagine using something else. If I just printed it out, there’s a lot of intersections where the process inserts itself into – it’s all associated with a grid and a system that refers to itself.

Halftone is binary, so when you’re burning the screens you’re making an image, and there’s a problem-solving [element] of having something be on or off. That’s where you see a lot of the work being black and white, because I’m able to build constructions in this rudimentary way of making images. There’s something I enjoy around the mechanics of it [the halftone] – it sets the analog materially, accentuates that on-off system.



QD: That brings the punk question in, because there's a huge connection between screen printing and the subculture around punk. Do you feel emotionally tied to that subculture, and does that attitude carry into the paintings themselves?

KMH: There might be some aesthetic there. I try not to be too rigid because I'm a Virgo, so it's second nature to be a perfectionist – and what I learned through punk was not to be that way. Technically the paintings are really complicated and specific to a recipe I've put together.

But punk, I think, doesn't really exist anymore. It's carried over into a totally different aesthetic now. If it's cool to not be cool, how does punk relate to coolness anymore? It's almost more like an ideology now: community or pretending not to be invested in capitalism. If I asked what's still punk about me, it'd be that my foundation was that idea of punk and community. Collaboration, community efforts, politics – they are still present. But as a subculture? I don't know if it really does exist.

QD: There's that quality of punk where you push your body to the edges to let the intensity of the rhythm really penetrate. Painting at this scale, with so much attention to the grid, feels like a very intense practice, too. Do you feel they are connected, drumming and painting?

KMH: When I did the performance at the opening recently, a lot of people said the sonic relationship gave them a whole other access point to the work. It's essentially the same thing – taking a grid and manipulating it to have these different registrations or repetitions, and asking how that builds space.

How do we sonically build space? Slide guitar creates this feeling of liminality, because the notes exist between notes. If we think of A, B, C, D, and how we construct music through these specific demarcations, we've taken a whole spectrum and reduced it to a few notes – but so many notes exist between those notes. If you can articulate that through the way we hear things, it's interesting how the form leads the construct.

QD: Your paintings reward slow looking. There's the temporal experience of looking for a long time, very closely, and also the experience of looking from a distance and then very close. How do you think about your surfaces, or how flatness is productive in your painting?

KMH: It's a little bit of a strategy. There's an optical illusion happening in the work – these things evoke a phenomenological experience when you're seeing them. The way it falls apart in flatness when you go see it, and then come away from it, is a kind of choreography. That act of looking accentuates its difference from the phone, its difference from the screen – it speeds up those things, but it's all those things too.

It also has to do with seeing the paintings in person versus seeing them photographed. Because of the different resolutions of how they're constructed, when they're photographed it compresses everything, so you're only experiencing what the painting looks like from far away. Seeing it in person, you understand the construction, and there's another reveal that happens at that lower resolution. It's almost impossible to articulate that through photography. There's something about having to see them in person.



QD: There's a lot of mathematical precision in your work, especially with the use of the grid, but you also allow for improvisation, drift, accidents. To me they feel like productive error and misregistration. Do you sabotage anything when you make something, or do you just let it happen?

KMH: It varies. There's a real goal to have some sort of illusion happen, an intention with light, where at a certain distance I really want this thing to be seen in a certain way. If that doesn't happen, I'll change it, fix it, redo it, cover it up. But other times, absolutely. There's letting the material have its own course. The process can do its own thing, because we're in a feedback loop when you're making. I'm the architect of this thing, but then it'll do something, and it's really exciting to bear witness – being alive, it's cool – and then I make a decision with that, in collaboration with it, rather than wanting to be the full authority. The unconscious material is the other part.

QD: That makes me think about recursion. You used the word “feedback,” which feels very organic, almost like things come alive. But recursion can also be very mechanical, such as doomscrolling on TikTok endlessly or a GIF reaction image. Using the metaphor of life and death, what’s the difference between those two recursions?

KMH: Early on, when I was playing with GIFs, it was so much around sex and death. In the patterns, it’s like a pleasure principle. In that repetition is mommy being dead and alive. It’s the theme of peek-a-boo, through a GIF. “Oh my god, mom’s gone, she’s back” – this really quick feeling of death and pleasure in life. *Dead alive, dead alive, dead alive.* [In] the feeling of the scroll, the touch – our monkey brains, they paid billions of dollars to make it the most pleasurable system for us to ever be in – there’s a tangible tap-in that happens. I do think of it as a death drive, sex drive, pleasure system through repetition.

QD: When you decide to repeat something, what kind of photographs get degraded or repeated? What kind of images are you drawn to?

KMH: I always try to figure out why I’m drawn to degradation: what am I choosing and why? It’s so hard to choose an image to be a representation of something; I can’t hold that responsibility, but I have to, because I’m making these things. I always say I’m more interested in the mechanics of putting the image, whatever it is, through this system. But what I’m drawn to is probably subjective, secretly personal. You can still enter the work without knowing the reference. You can draw something from yourself.

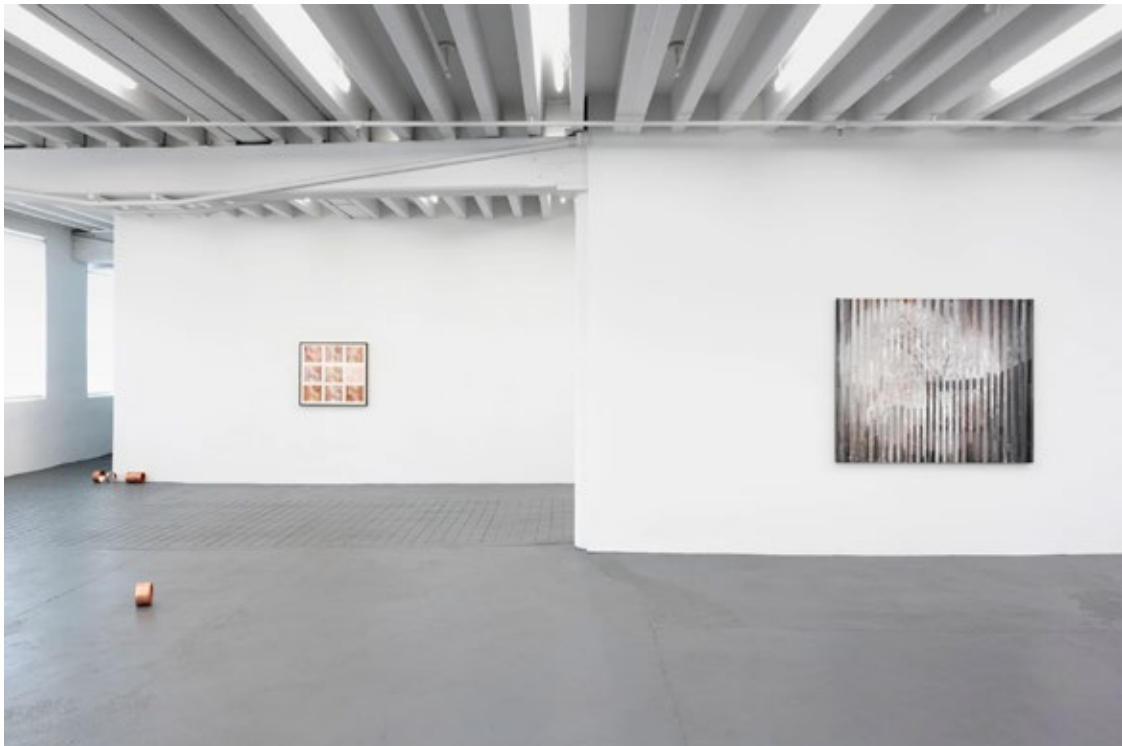
A lot of what I choose is B-side. If I used commercial, high-quality contemporary photography – stock images – that’s already constructed to present itself in a certain way. “This apple is perfect.” There’s so much intention into the construction of that image. So I try to find something in between, going back to that liminality. I use a lot of video stills – there’s something about them being in between an image, like an afterimage. Or photos from my phone, things I found curious, or a screen grab. A lot of the work is screen grabs from my laptop, so I’m already photographing off a screen.



There are no secret messages in the work. If anyone wants to know what the photo is, I'm happy to tell them. It's not that big of a deal. It's curious to see how the unknowing sustains interest. People want to know what's behind the process. I'm like, it doesn't really matter if it's a child going down a slide. The child might be me.

QD: You were speaking about optical illusions and optical effects, and there's this whole genealogy of 1960s and 70s optical art that was about transcendence, a utopian impulse. But when I look at your work, I feel uncertainty, paranoia, an awareness of surveillance – CCTV footage, post-internet degraded-image affect. How does that work against utopianism?

KMH: I totally agree, and it's something about my own suspicion or frustration – that's the genesis in a certain way. But it's not totally dystopic either; sometimes it just is what it is. I didn't write the playbook. It would be really challenging for me if someone proposed I make a utopic version of this system. I'm just mirroring and mimicking what I'm experiencing. I'm not trying to change anyone's opinion about what the architecture of the digital is. Like that movie *Backrooms* (2026) – there's so much of where we're meeting each other in void. We find community and nothingness all the time online. The relationship with seeking it out versus being fed it changes our power dynamics constantly. Is it algorithmically charged or is it our own curiosity finding these subcultures online?



QD: I don't feel you're that concerned with the genealogy of conceptual painting, but I feel you're very concerned with the genealogy of video art and radical cinema. I see a lot of Chris Marker and late Godard in those paintings – the idea of exploding the world apart through images. Who are the video artists or filmmakers important to you?

KMH: Sometimes the way I talk about my work feels like it's installation or sculpture. It is film that I am concerned with, it isn't so much painting. Though there's a group of painters I love. I came from a conceptual art background, so arriving at painting was a back-roads journey.

The last thing I saw that I absolutely loved was the Julia Stoschek Foundation show ("What a Wonderful World: An Audiovisual Poem") that came to Los Angeles – this massive video show in an abandoned building, around 45 artists tracing the history of cinema and video art. That was something recently that really inspired me.

I really love my friends' art too. My friend Bedros Yeretdzian in Los Angeles does these slow-spinning light projections put into spaces – he did this toilet at a punk venue that's spinning, and it becomes like Duchamp, but it's also this recognizable toilet for so many artists in LA. He plays with coolness in a really interesting way. I'm invested in my peers, in what's being made right now.

FRIEZE

Kate Mosher Hall Through the Looking Glass

The artist's paintings occupy the space between presenting and withholding

BY JULIANA HALPERT IN OPINION | 03 JAN 24

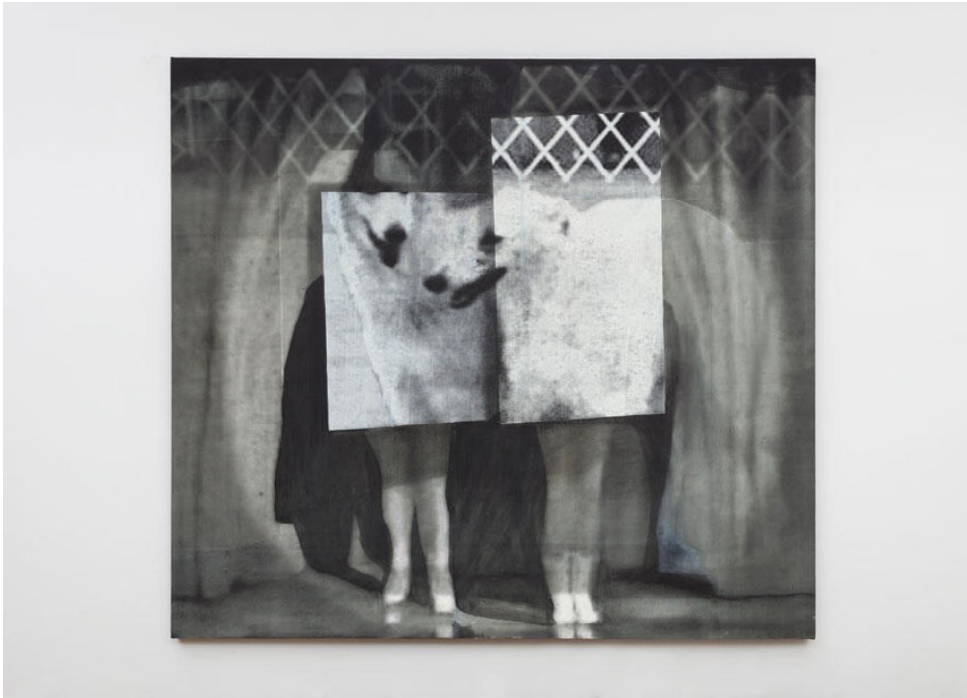


This article appears in the columns section of frieze 240, 'Sleight of Hand'

Juliana Halpert It's been three years since your most recent solo exhibition in Los Angeles, 'Without a body, without Bill' at Hannah Hoffman Gallery. I'm curious whether your practice has changed since then and, if so, how you situate within it the new body of work you'll be showing at the gallery early this year?

Kate Mosher Hall The upcoming show feels like a homecoming. 'Without a body, without Bill' debuted right after a major pandemic lockdown; I think 15 people came to the socially distanced opening. So, I haven't had a 'normal' show or opening with the gallery yet, and having this opportunity – in my hometown, no less – prompted me to think about how my work has evolved over the last few years.

'Without a body without Bill' was significant because I developed several of the paintings from that show into discrete series of works. So, what I think of as my mesh-like 'hole' paintings, my 'box' paintings, my 'stage' paintings and my 'recursion' paintings – ones with repeated, telescoping images – all began there. These categories feel like distinct visual tangents, but they are also near each other in terms of my thinking.



Kate Mosher Hall, *While Moving Between Worlds*, 2021. Courtesy: the artist and Hannah Hoffman Gallery, Los Angeles; photograph: Paul Salvesson

JH Do you think there is any unifying principle or interest across these different strains of your work?

KMH In 2020, while undertaking my MFA at the University of California, Los Angeles, I made some works that felt like a breakthrough. They were paintings of curtains with holes in them, and they helped me discover and understand the dynamics between visibility and invisibility, presenting and withholding. I became interested in that psychological space, but it was a binary that I then wanted to triangulate. What really worked in those paintings is that they contained illustrations of background characters whose eyes peered out from behind the curtains. The questions for the viewer became: are you looking at the painting and/or is the painting looking at you?

JH Tell me more about this triangulation. How do you integrate a third element into these strict binaries? What can exist between the seen and the unseen, between watching or being watched?

KMH The third perspective is what I'm always seeking to engender in my work. It's terrestrial yet spiritual, unknowing yet psychological: it's this gap between the experience of viewing something and the thing itself. When you see something in person, your relationship to it changes depending on whether you're up close or far away: in different moments, you can see entirely different things.

My painting *While Moving Between Worlds* [2021], for instance, depicts two people standing next to each other on a stage. They are wearing boxes that, together, form an image of two dogs – a painting within a painting. The image of the dogs is being 'projected' onto the boxes. But the way the 'projected' image lands on the boxes makes its composition unclear. People can stare at that work for ages and not manage to piece together all the information needed to make out the two dogs, until they move farther away from the canvas. I like that moment of not knowing what you are seeing, despite it being clearly presented or performed on a stage.

My painting *While Moving Between Worlds* [2021], for instance, depicts two people standing next to each other on a stage. They are wearing boxes that, together, form an image of two dogs – a painting within a painting. The image of the dogs is being ‘projected’ onto the boxes. But the way the ‘projected’ image lands on the boxes makes its composition unclear. People can stare at that work for ages and not manage to piece together all the information needed to make out the two dogs, until they move farther away from the canvas. I like that moment of not knowing what you are seeing, despite it being clearly presented or performed on a stage.

The questions for the viewer became: are you looking at the painting and/or is the painting looking at you?

I use a lot of found imagery in my work, and this painting incorporates a still from a 1951 television commercial for Old Gold cigarettes, which features dancers dressed up as cigarette boxes. I’ve always been interested in anthropomorphic stuff that builds tension around a narrative. I photoshopped, redrew and retraced the original footage, and juxtaposed the projected image of the dogs on top. In the finished work, the boxes are almost like costumes or characters that have been projected onto the figures and embodied by them.



Kate Mosher Hall, *LOQK*, 2019, Artist Curated Projects, Los Angeles. Courtesy: the artist and Hannah Hoffman Gallery, Los Angeles

JH I love that the dancers are standing in front of some sort of stage drapes. It strikes me as a wink and a nod to the earlier 'breakthrough' works that you mentioned, depicting curtains with holes in them. Is there any throughline here about theatricality or 'show' business?

KMH During the pandemic, I was thinking about different perspectives and about performance – what it looks like to view something in a space geared towards presentation versus when it's being hidden. For example, I thought about the different contexts in which we look at things – phone screens, stages, clubs, houses, books – what it's like to look at something alone as opposed to with others, and when the act of looking toggles between the intimate and the collective. I'm still interested in this concept, but I wanted to take it away from the idea of stage performance. So, for the works in 'Big View' – my solo show at Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York, last year – I incorporated depictions of boxes, mirrors and other elements that either reflect or project into the space. The scenarios in these works weren't set up within a theatrical reality: they're just innately anomalous or strange or dissonant.

JH So, more smoke and mirrors than straight stagecraft. Would you classify them as abstract works?

KMH There's this feeling that what is being presented simultaneously retains and loses its object-ness: windows becoming mirrors and vice-versa.



Kate Mosher Hall, *Who Saved Who?*, 2023. Courtesy: the artist and Hannah Hoffman Gallery, Los Angeles; photograph: Paul Salvesson

JH The painting *Who Saved Who?* [2023] depicts a dog running along a beach, but it looks like you have also inserted a second image of the same dog. Is this another trick up your sleeve?

KMH Yes, the dog is being reflected in a mirror that has been placed on the beach. Here, you can clearly see the progression from my earlier works: the mirror offers a different way of influencing how the image is understood. *Who Saved Who?* is a continuation of my exploration of the concept of looking and being looked at. The mirror was made and printed at a higher resolution, and the rest of the painting is at a lower resolution, so this accentuates the reflected space, which becomes a contradiction of the reality it is depicting. The ‘timing’ of the image is strange: it takes longer to find the mirror, or to understand what you are looking at, and then your perspective changes when you realize you are being asked to look into a mirror.



Kate Mosher Hall, *3000 lbs*, 2022. Courtesy: the artist and Hannah Hoffman Gallery, Los Angeles; photograph: Paul Salvesson

JH This multiplication of a motif is taken to the extreme in your ‘recursion’ paintings, such as the vast canvas *3,000 lbs* [2022]. One image is repeated at decreasing scales countless times, creating the effect of an endlessly receding tunnel. It’s dizzying and challenging to parse. Was this another tactic that you devised to straddle seeing and not seeing, or legibility and legerdemain?

KMH I've been told that I talk about my paintings as though they are sculptures. I speak of space and resolution, of the viewer's proximity to the work and how they should navigate what they're looking at. My thoughts in making these works were reactive to consuming huge quantities of images day to day. The multiplicity creates 'quantity' or 'space' in the image through two-point perspective. As the form extrapolates into space, it articulates something that is felt through the consumption of images over and over again.

This article first appeared in frieze issue 240 with the headline 'Behind the Curtain'

Main image: Kate Mosher Hall, While Moving Between Worlds (detail), 2021. Courtesy: the artist and Hannah Hoffman Gallery, Los Angeles; photograph: Paul Salvesson

JULIANA HALPERT

Juliana Halpert is a writer and photographer based in Los Angeles, US.

ARTFORUM

NEW YORK

Kate Mosher Hall

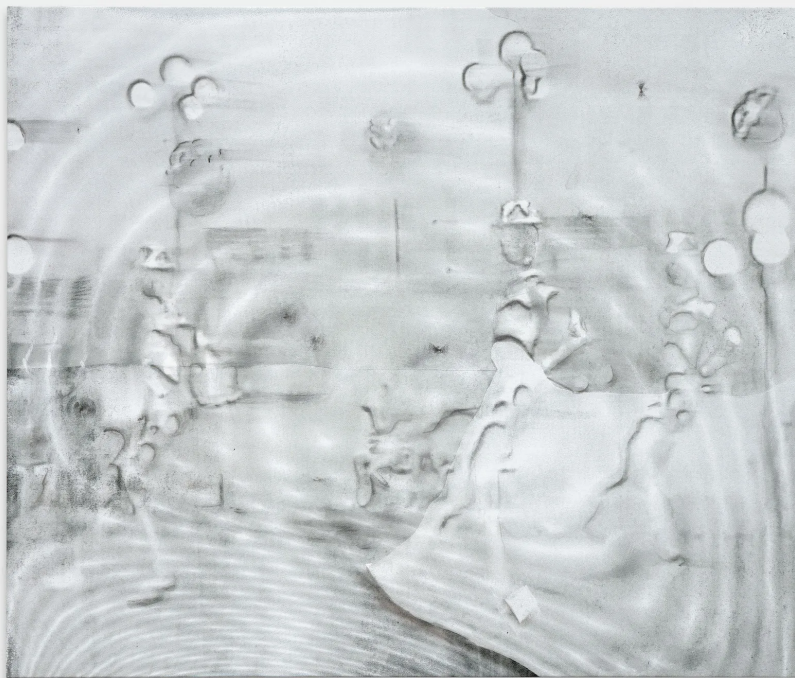
Miguel Abreu Gallery | Eldridge Street

88 Eldridge Street 4th Floor

September 8, 2023 - October 21, 2023

By Mariana Fernández

October 5, 2023 3:12 pm



Kate Mosher Hall, *Dove songs*, 2023, acrylic and charcoal on canvas, 55 x 65".

Big View (all works 2023), the eponymous painting of Kate Mosher Hall's exhibition here, might be a depiction of a planet from the window of a spaceship, or a rendering of a disco ball from behind a perforated curtain. Move closer, however, and suddenly you're trapped in a manhole gazing up at the world outside. And even nearer, the loose grid-like arrangement of spheres shatters into billions of unstable parts, like bacteria under a microscope. John Berger said that looking at a painting is an active choice: seeing produces recognition, which in turn produces words. Yet it's a sort of physiological short-circuit when the order of events is interrupted by multiple images hitting your brain at different moments—when sight and perception flit back and forth, attempting to capture something both obvious and elusive.

Mosher Hall deftly choreographs the movement of one's eyes across accretive layers of hand-painted and mesh-like, silk-screened imagery; she creates veils that hide but never fully conceal. Take *Dove songs*, a grisaille canvas in which what might be a bridge—we can sort of distinguish its arches and light posts—is distorted into a loose topography of swirls resembling spilled paint or spectral movement. Other works employ a hidden-in-plain-sight effect: The figure in the tiny *Zig* morphs from a dog in motion to a screaming child, a ghoul, or simply a battalion of particles caught up in a passing wind, depending on how you orient yourself before the picture. In *Flipper*—the most defiantly bizarre painting in this show—a negative space of silk-screened halftone patterns produces the appearance of spirits coursing and flashing at the center of a danse macabre, or on the spotlighted stage of a nightclub. Rather than being about an existential crisis of looking, the thirteen paintings here exploit the tenuous relationship between what we see and what we know, performing a collective wink at our tendency to dismiss ambiguity or the supernatural.



Kate Mosher Hall: perceptual limbos and moiré-noirs

by Leila Peacock

*A reflection on the not purely painted – but not
just printed – canvases of Los Angeles artist Kate
Mosher Hall*

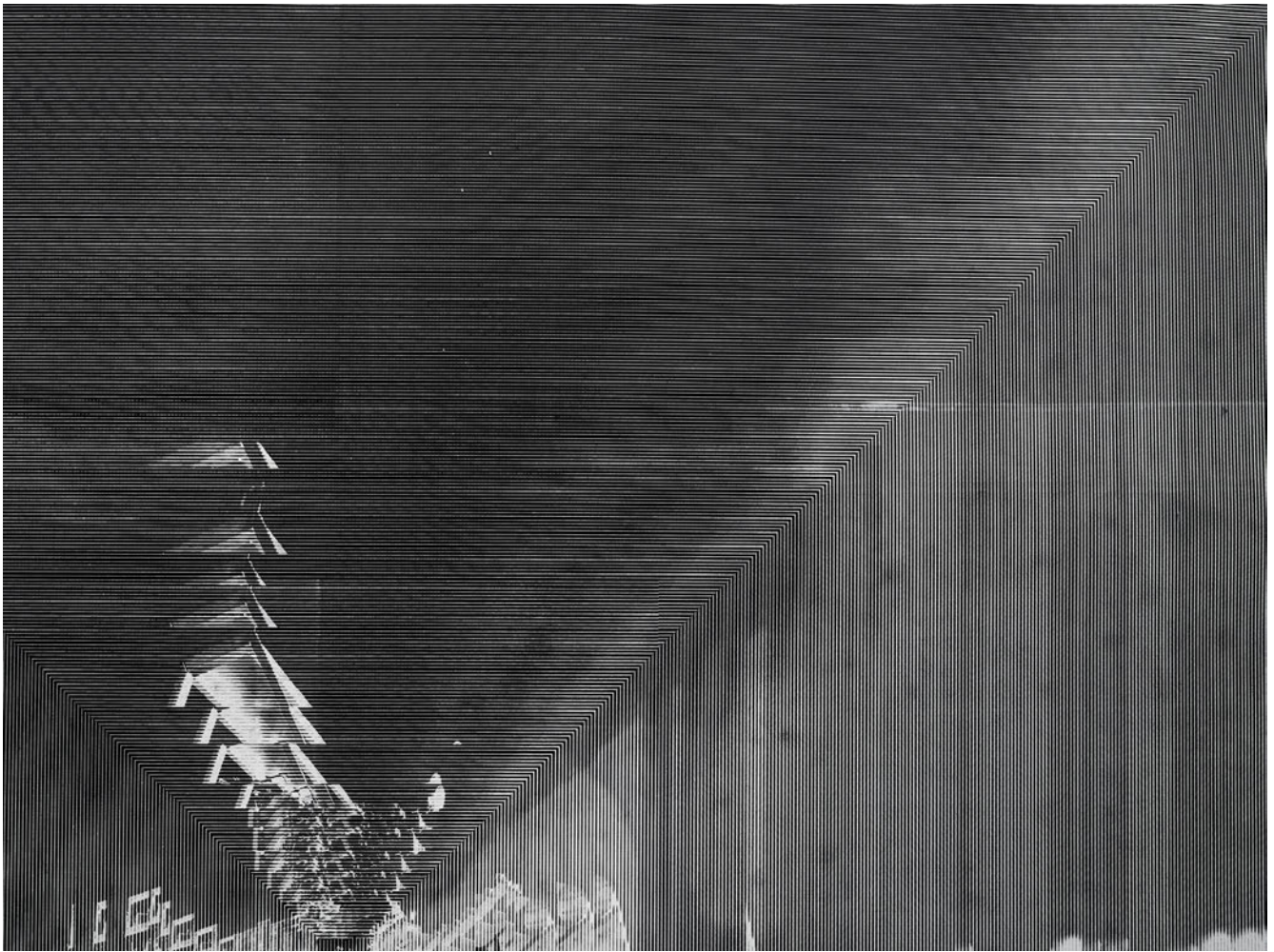
In the 19th-century, J.H. Brown wrote a treatise on the optical effects of afterimages, titled "Spectropia; or Surprising Spectral Illusions Showing Ghosts Everywhere", in which he used a detailed anatomical explanation of the eye to debunk the myth that this effect was evidence for the existence of ghosts. But seeing is believing; there is a gap between the scientific explanation of the effect and the experience of it, where something ineffable lurks.

To hear Los Angeles-based artist Kate Mosher Hall explain how she makes her works cannot prepare you for the effect of seeing them. They play tricks on the brain, their different parts revealing themselves according to your proximity. They have the

hypnotic qualities of Op art, if it were surveilled through the grain of a CCTV camera. Her works are made by adding successive layers of hand-painted and silkscreened pigment that most often result in canvases of thick and deftly engineered darkness. Important to this process is letting the elements "play out," [1] as she says, manipulating and constraining chance. Between the control of the brush and glorious accident inherent in printing comes a new kind of surface.



Kate Mosher Hall, "3,000 lbs", 2022. Acrylic on canvas, 84 x 82 inches (213.4 x 208.3 cm). Images courtesy of the artist and Hannah Hoffman, Los Angeles. Photography by Paul Salvesson.



Kate Mosher Hall, "3,000 lbs" (detail), 2022. Acrylic on canvas, 84 x 82 inches (213.4 x 208.3 cm). Images courtesy of the artist and Hannah Hoffman, Los Angeles. Photography by Paul Salveson.

Mosher Hall began playing in punk bands as a teenager and it was through the punk scene that she found her way into screen-printing. Her approach to the medium owes much to the DIY, messy, radical, and humorously irreverent aesthetics of punk: the ways it turned appropriation into a re-creative act. She produces works that are not just printed, but not purely painted: she is instead something of a *paintmaker*. Disrupting the negative to positive of the printing process to create double negatives, you are not quite seeing what's not quite there—this is a play of known unknowns and unknown knowns. The paradoxes that play out are almost Miltonic when in *Paradise Lost* the poet talks of "No light but rather darkness visible," or that which is "dark with excessive bright." These works create a perceptual limbo as your eyes grapple with spectral figures that peek from behind curtains, dance in the shadows, evade spotlights, blur just beyond our reach. Resolution becomes dissolution, collage becomes obstruction.



Kate Mosher Hall, "Curtain 5", 2019. Acrylic on canvas, 72 x 49 inches (182.9 x 124.5 cm). Images courtesy of the artist and Hannah Hoffman, Los Angeles.

There are many profound life events that feed into the making of an artist, things that mitigate and hone the way they see the world and therefore characterise their particular vision. Mosher Hall has, in her own words, one particularly "impactful story". Eighteen years ago, when attending a punk concert, a gun fight broke out nearby and she was hit by a stray bullet that went in behind her ear and out of her mouth. She recently wrote a very frank account of this event [2] and talks openly about it, but she reflects on it not for its dramatic value but on the way which it caused a tectonic shift in her relationship with the very act of seeing. She passed through the veil and back, and says: "from that moment on I became really acutely aware of the act of looking or of being looked at, how we look through things, and this lead to an interest in what you can and cannot see within a painting."



Kate Mosher Hall, "The Feeling of Being Looked At," 2020. Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 72 inches (152.4 x 182.9 cm). Images courtesy of the artist and Hannah Hoffman, Los Angeles.

She is interested in "activating the viewer in the space" and there is a deliberate attempt to orchestrate, as she says, a "delay for the image to hit" as we try to work out what we are looking at. The mesh of the silkscreen becomes a strategy of concealment and obfuscation; our desire to *perceive* forms is *offset* by our difficulty in reading them; instead we must *conceive* them for ourselves. Her paintings often depict mysterious characters dancing in a moiré-fringed gloom, something of the *danse macabre* about them, or the ghoulish quality of early animation. She has developed different motifs of obfuscation over the years, torn curtains like perceptual peep shows have morphed into spotlighted stages; symbols of an illumination denied.

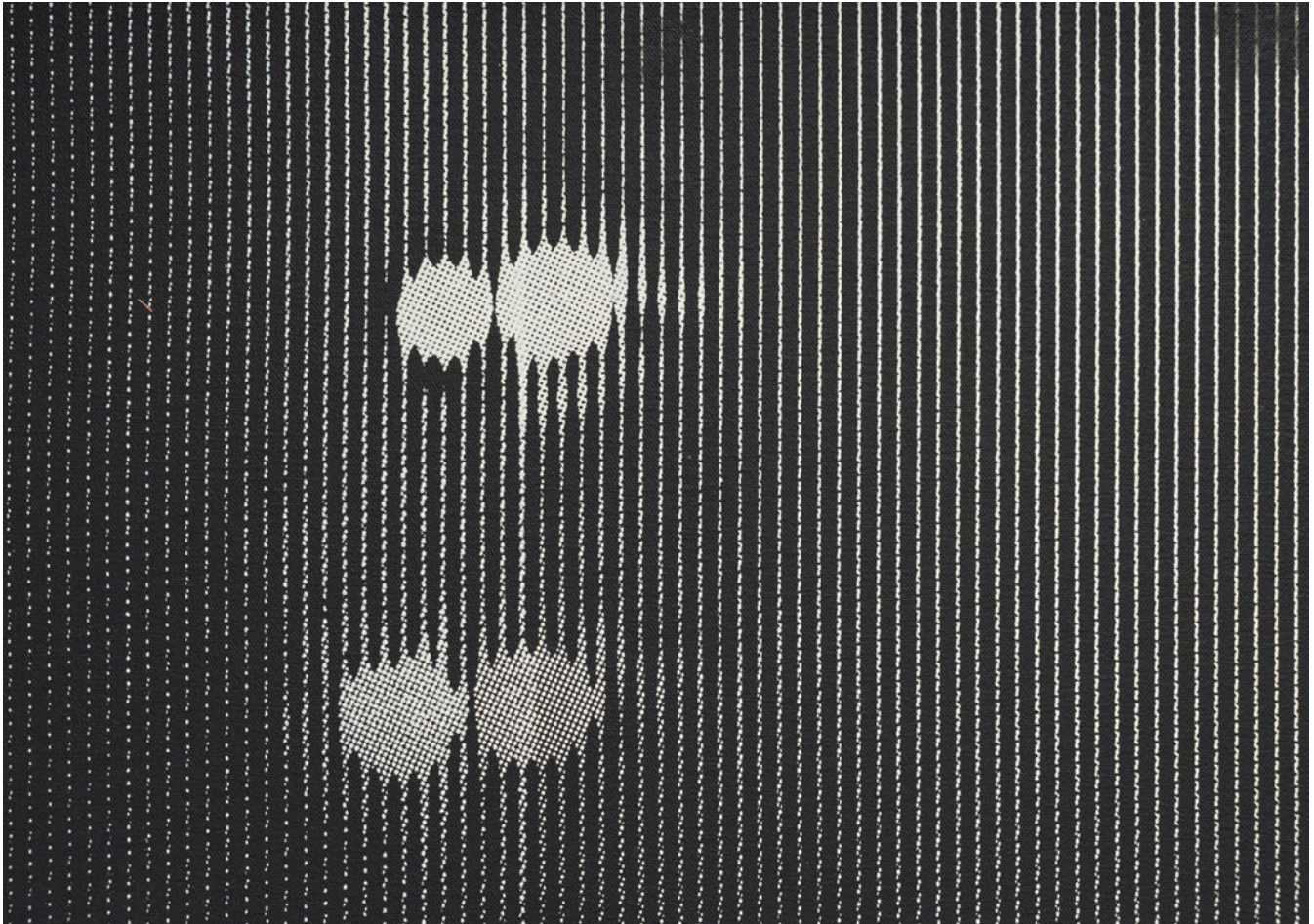


Kate Mosher Hall, Frieze NY. May 18 – 22, 2022. Hannah Hoffman Gallery, Booth. Work on the left: "Luck", 2022. Acrylic and charcoal on canvas. Dimensions: 84 x 82 inches (213.4 x 208.3 cm); work on the right: "3,000 lbs", 2022. Acrylic on canvas. Dimensions: 84 x 82 inches (213.4 x 208.3 cm). Image courtesy of the artist and Hannah Hoffman, Los Angeles. Photography by Isabel Asha Penzlien.

The poem by Rachelle Sawatsky that accompanied Mosher Hall's works at Frieze NY contains the line "I like to be lied to about the mechanics of optical illusions." Her works make expressive use of optical effects that are intentionally challenging to their own digitisation, they resist compression. Many of her latest works use moiré patterns, that glitch that arises when two textured patterns are layered over each other but rotated slightly, creating visual interference on a screen. If you view the works online your screen will struggle.



Kate Mosher Hall, "Letting the light in", 2021. Acrylic on canvas, 56 x 60 inches (142.2 x 152.4 cm). Images courtesy of the artist and Hannah Hoffman, Los Angeles.



Kate Mosher Hall, "Letting the light in" (detail), 2021. Acrylic on canvas, 56 x 60 inches (142.2 x 152.4 cm). Images courtesy of the artist and Hannah Hoffman, Los Angeles.

Many of the works evoke the disquieting atmosphere of a California noir, but the murder victim is a rasterised JPEG, blown well beyond the limits of clarity. We are the confounded detective, left to sift through the dismembered images for the shape of the crime. It is one of the rules of classic detective fiction that the supernatural may play no part in the plot. But what is the supernatural if not our own tendency to layer the phantasmagoric over reality – to see the ghosts in afterimages – compensating for the fact that the simple explanation is never enough. As Mosher Hall says, she wants to create works that are "flirting with reality, but rooted in something that's not real." An unwanted gain in the real, these canvases fulfil the definition of the uncanny: strangely familiar and yet ambiguous and eerie. Mediated images become spirit mediums. Between the thought and the act falls the shadow.

[1] All quotes attributed to the artist are taken from a conversation in January 2023.

[2] <https://flash—art.com/article/kate-mosher-hall-letter-from-the-city/>

Kate Mosher Hall
Frieze NY
May 18 - 22, 2022
Hannah Hoffman Gallery, Booth FR9
The Shed

Visual interferences that dots make scuff us

Before digital imaging,
there were two techniques
for creating a halftone image

You could hang a piece of coarse woven fabric
in front of an unexposed photographic plate and
the weave would filter the light like a mesh

or sub the fabric for a screen with hand-cut
parallel lines like slits

Once exposed and developed
using photo-etching techniques
the photographic plate
made an image composed
only of dots or lines

I am imagining these life-size stencils
in a domestic space, like a living room:
solutions that emerged from everyday objects

a linen shirt draped over the back of a kitchen chair
on the wall the horizontal lines of shadows made from bamboo blinds

until someone has the idea to use them as light filters
and hoists them up impromptu-like

I need to describe
what I am learning about
print technology
in physical terms,
my terms

I learn that jpeg
artifactualing is made from
compressing data by
saving it as a jpeg

Contours of what
otherwise might
be the clean edges of
shapes

become
jagged and halo-ed
when the file size
is increased

This is the by-product of the
circulation system
of image processing
(batch scaling up and down
and back)

This is dust
that has been scaled from shapes
and released into a pictorial space

On a screen, dust can be made from
the microfibrils of hard smooth objects
like playing cards, mirrors and dice,
creating a texture culled together
from non-essential data

Under a microscope one piece of dust
the size of a hole in an audio
speaker
becomes immersive

What is this dust
that cannot be root-bound
or kicked off like shoes

Brown and grey dust made
by week old flower bouquets

LA freeway dust nestled at the
bottom of jars used to mix paint

A surface covered in the
velvet like texture

How can I describe
dust blowing underfoot from
memoji dog picking up speed
fuzzzzzzzz

The first time we saw
the Sturtevant's Finite / Infinite,
a video projection of a dog
running, that filled the entire
warehouse space of 356 Mission Road,
we weren't together

We were co-workers
in an art world job

We had nothing to say
to each other. No idea how
to interpret it except to
feel the energy of this enormous
beast on repeat together.

The force of the dog running
is cathartic
energy

If there is something that escapes the closed loop of the GIF
it is the physical pleasure of running

The painting is a mise-en-scene
of this running scene

The interior of the camera obscura
is a dog beach
with two mirrors
instead of one, side by side

Come closer

I am looking at artifacts
of digital processing and editing
translated by silkscreened acrylic paint
that simulates and adheres
to the logic of the Photoshop file

paint into grids of high res
and low res dots

but I am also looking at last night
playing threes

for one dollar bills
with a button
that makes
everything
night vision
green

a painting tool that
softens the sepia hue
of an absurdist film noir
night and grades the jagged
edges of pixels

a squeegee that flattens
the undulating stage curtain

the cumulative
sources of these images:
a bootleg of a bootleg of a video still
from a batch upload to Youtube
a How to Video of scrap metal graveyards
Op art fan art

(my methodology
for writing is
the pleasure of
having image
associations flood
through my hands
like water)

I like being lied to about
the mechanics of optical illusions

because when I hold my phone
up to the painting, the camera
animates a moire pattern
while attempting to register
the image

- Rachelle Sawatsky

Kate Mosher Hall (b.1986) lives and works in Los Angeles. She received her MFA from UCLA. Her work is in the collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Recent solo exhibitions include *Offset* at Tanya Leighton (2021), *Without a body, without Bill* at Hannah Hoffman Gallery (2021), *LOQK*, Artist Curated Projects, Los Angeles (2019) and *Wind Breaker*, Phil Gallery, Los Angeles (2019).

Gabriella Angeleti., "From Latinx artists to new takes on Surrealism, curator Marcela Guerrero's favourite works at Frieze New York," The Art Newspaper, May 19, 2022



Frieze New York 2022 // Feature

From Latinx artists to new takes on Surrealism, curator Marcela Guerrero's favourite works at Frieze New York

Eight must-see works of art from the Whitney Museum of American Art's associate curator

Gabriella Angeleti. Photographs by Allison Dinner

19 May 2022



Marcela Guerrero, an associate curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art

Marcela Guerrero, an associate curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art, is spearheading two major exhibitions this year: *No Existe Un Mundo Poshuracán: Puerto Rican Art in the Wake of Hurricane Maria* and *Martine Gutierrez: Supremacy*. She was part of the team behind the seminal show *Vida Americana: Mexican Muralists Remake American Art, 1925-1945* and as a curatorial fellow at the Hammer Museum helped



Photo: Allison Dinner

Kate Mosher Hall, *Luck* (2022)

Hannah Hoffman

“There are so many artists now connecting Surrealist traditions to the present, as Cecilia Alemani did in the Venice Biennale. Kate Mosher Hall is one of the artists working in that vein. You’re not quite sure what you’re looking at in these works; the abstraction and distortion of whatever figure she was capturing at first becomes a dreamscape. She is very technically proficient.”

Contemporary
Art Review

.la

Kate Mosher Hall at Hannah Hoffman

March 31, 2021

Text by Allison Nicole Conner



Kate Mosher Hall, *Yellow Dust* (2021). Acrylic and charcoal on canvas, 82 x 84 inches. Image courtesy of the artist and Hannah Hoffman, Los Angeles. Photo: Paul Salveson.

I couldn't tell if I was looking at a photographic negative or an assemblage of dreams. *Yellow Dust* (2021), an acrylic and charcoal painting by Kate Mosher Hall, depicts a nighttime scene—a wolf caught mid-slink as it crosses an ochre-tinted landscape. Though its face is a blurry smudge, the animal appears mesmerized by something beyond the canvas. An off-kilter pale yellow square frames the wolf's upper body like a ghostly spotlight. Stepping back, I noticed the repetition of that yellowish brightness, and the way it either cuts parts of the scenery into smaller screens or hovers near the bottom of the canvas like intrusive searchlights. Inky shadows obscure the specifics of time and place, stranding the wolf in a twilight realm. Are those cliffs? Is that a street sign? I jumped, startled by a corpse-like shadow near the bottom left corner. These ambiguities in Hall's paintings go beyond optical illusion. Her work is deeply concerned with the spiritual conditions of looking, and how it can expand and limit our sense of reality.

The nine paintings in *Without a body, without Bill*, Hall's new solo exhibition at Hannah Hoffman, present out-of-focus scenes that splice together the sublime and the weird, where memories seem to have been partially swallowed by delirious hallucinations. While meandering the sunlit gallery and peering into each composition, I saw disembodied legs, phantasmal silhouettes, and a detached spinal column slithering like a worm, though figures and locations were generally hard to make out under Mosher's dense distortions of shadow and light. Whenever I settled on a plausible interpretation of what I was looking at (a baby doll, rows of trees), an odd shape would materialize from the background, destabilizing my sense of reality. Animals dissolved into human forms as invisible figures took center stage. *Freeway* (2020) portrays another moving animal, this time a coyote sprinting across a barren road. Here, instead of yellow light, an ashen periwinkle hue creates the floodlight effect. The illuminated coyote and the misshapen apparitions floating around it are given equal attention, erasing clear distinctions between subject and setting.

Reminiscent of works by film director Guy Maddin, Hall creates surreal tableaux whose aesthetics borrow indiscriminately from vaudeville, silent films, magic shows, German Expressionism, and more. *While Moving Between Worlds* (2021) shows two performers whose upper bodies have been replaced by white boxes. Situated inside the boxes is a cropped image of two greyhound-like dogs. The legs tap on a stage framed by a fence that dissolves into a curtain. The crash of styles and moods conjure the associative textures of our inner worlds.

Hall complicates the act of looking by questioning, as Nicole-Antonia Spagnola writes in the press release, why the look commands "such procedural power." This power often disappears whatever falls outside its carefully-defined borders. Instead, Hall depicts the disappeared elements, draining her bodies of solid forms in favor of shapelessness. Shorn of the boundaries that keep us in opposition to the elements beyond our

perspectives, the paintings imagine a gaze attuned to our metaphysical bonds.

Kate Mosher Hall: Without a body, without bill runs from February 20–April 10, 2021 at Hannah Hoffman Gallery (2504 W. 7th St., 2nd floor, Los Angeles, CA 90057).

<https://contemporaryartreview.la/kate-mosher-hall-at-hannah-hoffman/>

THE FEELING OF BEING LOOKED AT | KATE MOSHER HALL

The Feeling of Being Looked At (2020) represents a poetic manifesto by Kate Mosher Hall. Hall's artistic research deeply questions the act of looking and its relational implications, the meaning of observing and being observed and the bond that is created between two beings in mutual gaze.

On Hall's canvas, in front of the shadows of animals as dark as ghosts, a dark grid separates the two planes of vision, like a not perfectly closed shutter that allows glimmers of light to pass between its rods. The observer looks at the canvas and realizes that he is being observed by the animal ghosts that are on the other side. An initial feeling of uneasiness gives way to the relief of actually being safe; the realization of being observed alerts the senses so that the gaze that stares can be supported and returned, to restore balance in the relationship between the eyes.

The Feeling of Being Looked At explores the possibilities of vision, the relationships of power that these establish and the spaces offered to the eye: Hall represents on the canvas the visual relationship between two individuals, defining their boundaries, traits, obstacles and opportunities.



©Kate Mosher Hall, *The Feeling of Being Looked At*, 2020

Silkscreen and acrylic on canvas

152.4×182.9 cm

Unique

(HALL-2020-0032)

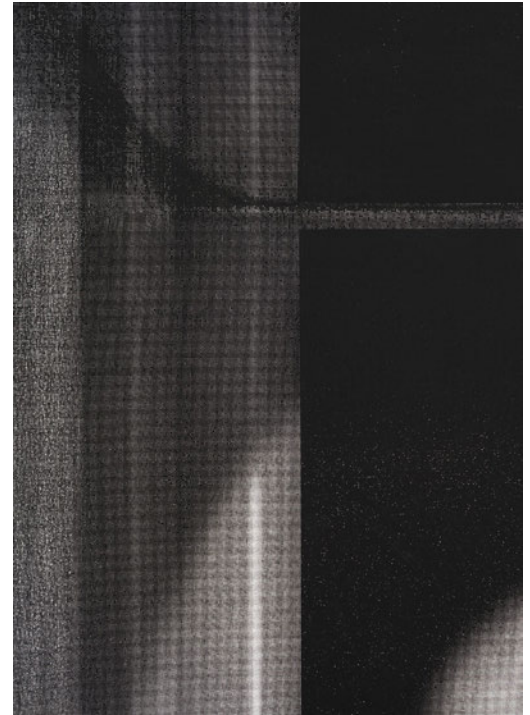
Courtesy of the artist and Tanya Leighton, Berlin Photography: Dan Finlayson

GALLERY 30 APRIL
WEEKEND – 2 MAY
BERLIN 2021

*Discoveries Kate Mosher Hall

Gallery Weekend Berlin Where do you come from, what should we know about you and your background?

Kate Mosher Hall The long story short—I was born in Los Angeles California, then moved to Mississippi, then moved to Vancouver, Canada, then moved back to California. When I was 18 I survived a shooting accident. Shortly after, I joined an all-female punk band called Mika Miko where I played and toured the world for a few years. During this time, I fell in love with silk-screening, making show posters and t-shirts. I then went to art school and had jobs doing silk-screening. I now run my own artist print studio in Los Angeles.



Entrance, 2021 (Detail)
182,9 × 124,5 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Tanya Leighton, Berlin
Photo: Dan Finlayson



Entrance, 2021 (Detail)
182,9 × 124,5 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Tanya Leighton, Berlin
Photo: Dan Finlayson

GWB What was the inspiration for your current body of work?

KMH I am interested in the act of looking and often creating moments of misregistration or unrecognizability. In my last show with Hannah Hoffman in Los Angeles I made work that was inspired by grief from losing my dear dog Billie. The paintings show different perspectives of public and private viewing spaces. The show included images of performances on stages with the dog as the protagonist. In creating this new body of work, I was reading about the spectrum of narrative and how a “weak” narrative is perceived by a viewer. My thought was to make a set where the protagonist has been removed and now the viewer is confronted with their own imagination and storytelling.

GWB Could you describe your upcoming exhibition in a few words? What can we expect to see?

KMH All of the paintings are made by silk-screening while using an array of different techniques and experimental processes. The paintings are segments from the “set” and installed in the gallery so that the rest of the gallery space is imagined as the missing set. Absence in this installation is an active or psychological space for the viewer to engage with. Lights and shadows in the paintings also suggest other imaginative spaces within the “set”. There’s also a strangeness in how the paintings have an artificial aesthetic or blur yet there are moments that appear to be realistic.



Entrance, 2021
182,9 × 124,5 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Tanya Leighton, Berlin
Photo: Dan Finlayson

GWB How does your show sound like?

GWB What is special about exhibiting in Berlin for the first time?

KMH I am so grateful to be in Berlin. The last time I was here was in 2006 playing drums.



Courtesy of the artist and Tanya Leighton, Berlin
Photo: Dan Finlayson

Kate Mosher Hall (born in 1986 in Los Angeles, California) received her MFA from UCLA in 2020. Since then she has been pushing the boundaries of silkscreening techniques in her painting practice. Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include ‘Without a body, without Bill’ at Hannah Hoffmann Gallery, Los Angeles in 2021; ‘LOQK’ at Artist Curated Projects, Los Angeles, and ‘Wind Breaker’ at Phil Gallery, Los Angeles, both in 2019, among others. Selected group exhibitions include ‘K as in Knight’ at Helena Anrather, New York in 2021; ‘Last Call’ at The Gallery at Michael’s, Santa Monica, California, and ‘The Sun is Also a Star’ at Artist Curated Projects, Los Angeles, both in 2019.