

LENNON, WEINBERG, INC.

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Melissa Meyer

New Work

March 31 – May 7, 2016

Gallery hours: Tuesday-Saturday 10am – 6pm



Counterparts, 2015

In 2014, Melissa Meyer was commissioned by the Art in Embassies program to create a large outdoor mural for the entrance to a new American Embassy in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. The composition joins a watercolor background to a symmetrically mirrored pictograph derived from an earlier black and white oilstick drawing. She travelled there to research regional textile motifs and established a surrounding border populated with symbols she had observed, along with others that she invented. The mural, titled *Counterparts*, was created digitally, has been fabricated in glazed ceramic tile and will be installed in the spring of 2016.

Meyer welcomed the challenge of working in a new process and medium, and as often happens, the subsequent oil paintings reflect certain influences from the mural as they incorporate new approaches to composition and color. Two recent medium-sized diptychs, *Entangled* and *Twosome Too*, share with the mural a bright, warm-hued background and a compositionally independent foreground layer of interconnected gestures in predominately dark blues.



Jocund, 2015, 84 x 120", oil on canvas

Character Set, *Draw the Line* and *Couplet* restrict the role played by color to a minimum and echo the figure-ground structure of the mural along with some of its distinctive shapes. Meyer has said that after working on a series in color, she often makes what she considers a "black and white painting" in which she mixes up warm and cool blacks in different values. They are among the most graphic works Meyer has ever painted on canvas, and at six by eight feet, *Draw the Line* has a commanding scale.

Twain, *Double Feature* and *On the Double* are small-scale diptychs. Meyer filled the square panels with rhythmic marks in colors ranging from bright to pale, from an acidic yellow-green to a juicy magenta. The compression of the glyphs and the contrast of the colors create a jazzy energy that is settled somewhat by the calibrated balance of elements in the two halves of the paintings.

The largest painting in the show, the seven by ten foot diptych *Jocund*, has characteristics similar to the small diptychs, in the way that Meyer abuts rather than layers the bundled marks. But at this scale, the gestures open up, the width of the brushstrokes vary and the space expands. *Vivace*, also a large painting, is fresh and open. It feels both spontaneous and deliberate, evidenced by the swift mark-making, the clarity of the palette and the overall distribution of weight and color across the painting's surface.



Vivace, 2015, 80 x 78", oil on canvas

Double Nature, at 16 x 20 inches, is the smallest painting in the exhibition. It is a remarkable painting that in its diminutive format encapsulates so many of the qualities that distinguish all of these new paintings. Its impeccable balance of color and form, the lucidity of its execution and

something simply new about it, shows Melissa Meyer confidently extending an already adventuresome body of work.

This is the fourth solo exhibition of Melissa Meyer at Lennon, Weinberg. She was born in New York in 1946 and received both undergraduate and graduate degrees from New York University. Her lengthy exhibition history includes solo exhibitions at Elizabeth Harris Gallery, New York; Rebecca Ibel Gallery, Columbus, Ohio; Holly Solomon Gallery, New York and Galerie Renee Ziegler, Zurich, Switzerland.

Meyer's development has been surveyed in two traveling exhibitions – one originated at the New York Studio School and the second at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania. Her works have been included recently in group exhibitions at The Jewish Museum, New York; Texas Gallery, Houston; Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey; The Hyde Collection, Glens Falls, New York; the Fiterman Art Center at the Borough of Manhattan Community College, and the National Academy of Design in New York, an organization of which she is a member.

She has completed public commissions in New York, Tokyo, Shanghai and Biskek, Kyrgyzstan. Her work is included in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Brooklyn Museum, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, The Jewish Museum, the McNay Art Museum and many other public and private collections across the United States.

Meyer was awarded a Rome Prize from the American Academy in Rome and has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Pollock Krasner Foundation. She is a frequent artist in residence at Yaddo in Saratoga Springs, New York, and worked at the MacDowell Colony for the first time in 2012. A dialogue between Meyer and art historian Stephanie Buhmann is included in a new book of interviews with contemporary women artists, *New York Studio Conversations*, published by The Greenbox.

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