



Claire Seidl, *Violets are Blue*, 2021, Oil on linen, 28 x 24"

CLAIRE SEIDL *Violets are Blue*

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David Richard Gallery is pleased to present *Violets are Blue*, an exhibition by New York-based artist Claire Seidl and her first solo presentation with the gallery. The exhibit is comprised of 15 oil paintings, mostly on linen and a couple on canvas, painted during 2021 and the first part of 2022 with just a few included from 2018 to 2020 that resonate with the new paintings. The compositions created by the artist's layering of drawn lines with a range of subtle to bold gestural strokes will be readily recognized. However, the surprise in this new body of work is the broader, more vivid color palette that includes pinks, yellows, blues and reds.

The three paintings incorporating pink are the largest in the presentation and would even make De Kooning take pause. The variations in hues are from soft pink infused with yellow, thinly applied as ground colors, with overlays of thin, bold, linear strokes of black in *The Big Picture* that create an upbeat nod to spring. Another painting with pink, *Believe You Me*, is moodier with combinations of red and pink, overlaid with thicker, bolder, wider strokes of black and white. The third painting, *Take it From Me*, uses darker pink with smudges of red, infused with yellow, to generate an orange glow. Black is also extensively used in this work, but in two contrasting ways: dark, fine lines and thin, translucent swaths of black that read as dark gray revealing the warmer colors below.

The yellows are also very dynamic, ranging from large passages of sun-kissed lemon yellow in *It Don't Mean A Thing*, to thick, short smudges of less vibrant, ochre yellow on a neutralized grey-green ground, accented with thin vertical strokes of bright yellow in *This Must be the Place*; then, all the way to a darker painting derived from the surface-mixing of yellow with black that generates an olive green color with hints of bright yellow peeking through.

About Claire Seidl's Paintings:

Seidl's paintings are a slow read, the layers of color and presence of lines combined with brush marks, washes, and swaths of color, take a while to capture and absorb. The paintings are full of binaries: thick and thin, translucent and opaque, fine lines and wide brush strokes, figure and ground, light and dark, neutral to darker palettes and now, the addition of brighter colors.

The reveal of Seidl's painting process adds to this slow read as she layers over the initial drawing on the support with many additional applications of pigment and marks to build the palette and surface. Each new layer hides a bit of the prior one while adding more movement and content on top with each mark. The additions, without completely covering the previous layers and marks, leave footprints behind that provide the viewer with a trail of what preceded each brush stroke and layer. The process reflects the constructing and editing that adds a dimension of time to the organic evolution of imagery and the painting's final composition. Each stroke and layer beget the next until resolution is achieved in the artist's eye.

The combination of binaries with her process add to the mystery of Seidl's paintings which rely largely on the subtle differences in color values to distinguish between the various marks and strokes on the surface of the paintings. This quality relates to her interest in photography and, in particular, to images taken at night. The lower the level of light, the lower the contrast, and therefore, the values of a range of colors become closer and similar, making the distinction between shapes and forms less clear or obvious. The imagery in the photos informs her painting and influences the often-neutral palettes, putting an emphasis on the painting process and its resulting shapes to generate composition.

There are macro and micro aspects to Seidl's paintings that result from her noted process and the additions of layers with residue remaining as an evidentiary trail from the preceding marks. At a macro level, they are about drawing and the act of painting. Moving the paint across the canvas using a variety of brush strokes that ultimately become a series of isolated and overlapping forms. Thus, at a micro level her paintings are about line and mark making.

Color, until recently, has been secondary. The rationale being that a focus on the lines and lush marks, requires a limited color palette, to not detract or compete with the lines and marks. In some cases, Seidl uses only varied values of the same or very related colors referencing her observations from night photography. Or, if she uses a wider color palette, then each hue is generally of the same value. Thus, continuing to place emphasis on the acts of drawing and mark making with paint.

Through this approach Seidl's process is revealed, fully transparent, both literally and figuratively. In fact, the lines and brush strokes are often generated using opaque and translucent pigment creating layers of near monochrome colors with value shifts providing the internal light needed to reveal the strokes as silhouetted forms and creating an illusory perceptual space within each canvas. The end game, therefore, is that subtle dimensional space within the otherwise flat picture plane.

Seidl's processes not only includes the complexity and layering of line and marks but are done in such a way as to create fragmentation within the compositions. Inherently, this approach creates the perception of depth and space—something receding, something beyond the surface, deep in the abyss, while other marks (or shapes) are advancing and come to the foreground. Texture is another tool deployed to not only create palpable surfaces, but also to interact with light, cast shadows and provide a greater range of internal values from the same hues. All of these methods generate the suggestion of volume and illusory space within the compositions. But Seidl's act of painting is literal, not illusory nor hidden from the viewer.

Variations in color values and using a restricted color palette historically kept the visual emphasis on the drawing and mark making in Seidl's paintings. However, in this presentation, it is clear that the addition of color and a broader palette does not detract from the mark making and focus on shapes and lines. The compositions are still perfectly balanced, and the process remains fully revealed. The difference is the wider possible range of moods and tone that can be achieved by incorporating the brighter, vivid colors.

About Claire Seidl:

Claire Seidl has been an abstract painter for forty years and a photographer for twenty. She grew up in Connecticut and moved to New York City after receiving her BFA from the College of Visual and Performing Arts at Syracuse University. She received her MFA in Painting from Hunter College, City University of New York and taught in the art department at Hunter College for a decade. Seidl went on to study photography at the International Center for Photography and then taught in the art department of Hofstra University for five years. She now lives and works in New York City and in Rangeley, Maine.

Seidl exhibits nationally and internationally, has had 40 solo shows, and has participated in over 100 group shows. Museum and University venues include the Aldrich Museum, Noyes Museum, Columbus Museum, McNay Art Museum, South Bend Museum, The Baker Museum, Ewing Gallery at University of Tennessee, Murray State University, KY, Hamilton College, Yeshiva University, Haverford College, College of William and Mary, Virginia Commonwealth University, DePauw University; Newcastle Polytechnic, England, Novosibirsk State Art Museum, Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Russian Museum of Photography, Portland Museum of Art, Ogunquit Museum, University of Maine Museum of Art, Bates College Museum of Art, University of New England.