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***Suspension of Disbelief***

Margaret Welsh

May, 3 - June 8, 2024, Opening: Friday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> 6-8pm

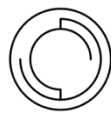


Margaret Welsh documented in her studio

*“My work pushes back against the myth of the blank white canvas. I’m not inventing forms; I’m discovering them. I’m simply making visible the beauty already hidden in materials.”*

— Margaret Welsh

**ENGAGE Projects** is pleased to announce our upcoming solo exhibition *Suspension of Disbelief*, in which feminist abstractionist Margaret Welsh gives occasion to the anti-heroic narrative, infusing domestic magic into her paintings made of castaway paper and house paint. Vertical compositions will be draped on the walls of the gallery in soft palettes of pinks, beiges, and browns. Growing out of her earlier “Trophy Woman” paintings that utilized the same materials but presented the tonally painted tarps folded and tightly bound to panels with twine, *Suspension of Disbelief* seems to unwrap the parceled compositions in favor of a grander scope of large-scale abstractions akin to the body in size, gesture, and color. Welsh’s paintings approach the viewer by saying, ‘let’s imagine, just for a moment. . .’ creating a space where, however fleetingly, anything is possible.



Informing her path to abstraction, Welsh long questioned the hyper-masculine norms of the genre. She wondered if there was a way to create within that tradition and remain authentic to her own experience. She says, “As women, we’re told you're either smart or beautiful, and you can't be both. It feels as though if we collapse into beauty, we are also collapsing into meaninglessness, decadence, and bourgeois political stances, especially as they relate to abstraction.” Welsh’s work smashes this binary in favor of another path.

*Suspension of Disbelief* refers to a quote by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who wrote of the necessity in times of doubt for “the willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith.” To reinvigorate old forms, the suspension of disbelief is a necessity for “awakening the mind’s attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us.” Shaped by an emphasis on autobiographical information and emotion, Welsh’s paintings are full of an intuitive knowledge that is at once deeply beautiful and deeply feminist.

Welsh earned her BA in English from Northwestern University and her MFA in Studio Arts from the University of Illinois, Chicago, where she studied under Phyllis Bramson, Julia Fish, and Tony Tasset. Her work has been exhibited at PPOW (NYC), White Columns (NYC), CASSTL (Antwerp), and Charim Project Space (Vienna).