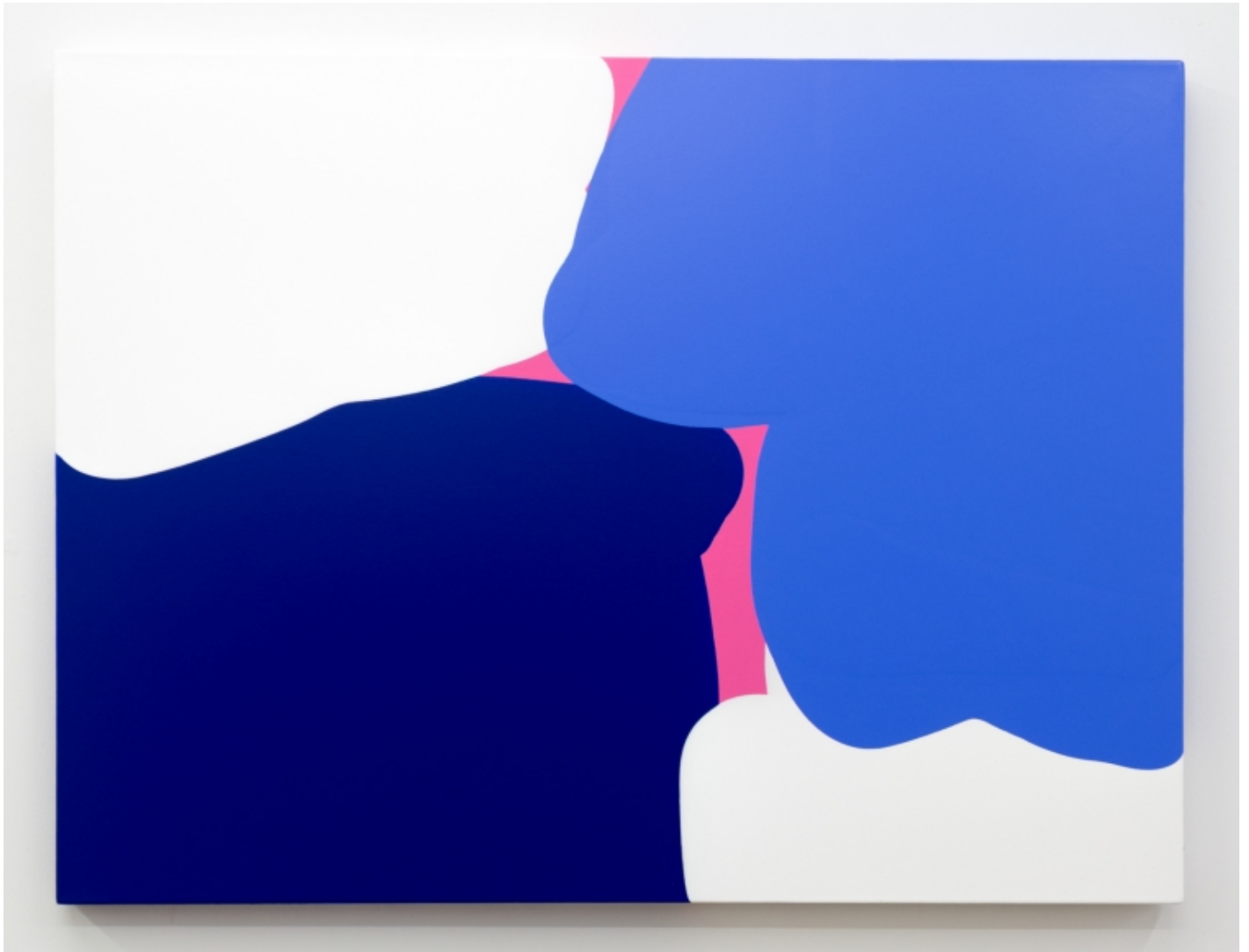


TWO COATS OF PAINT

December 6, 2019

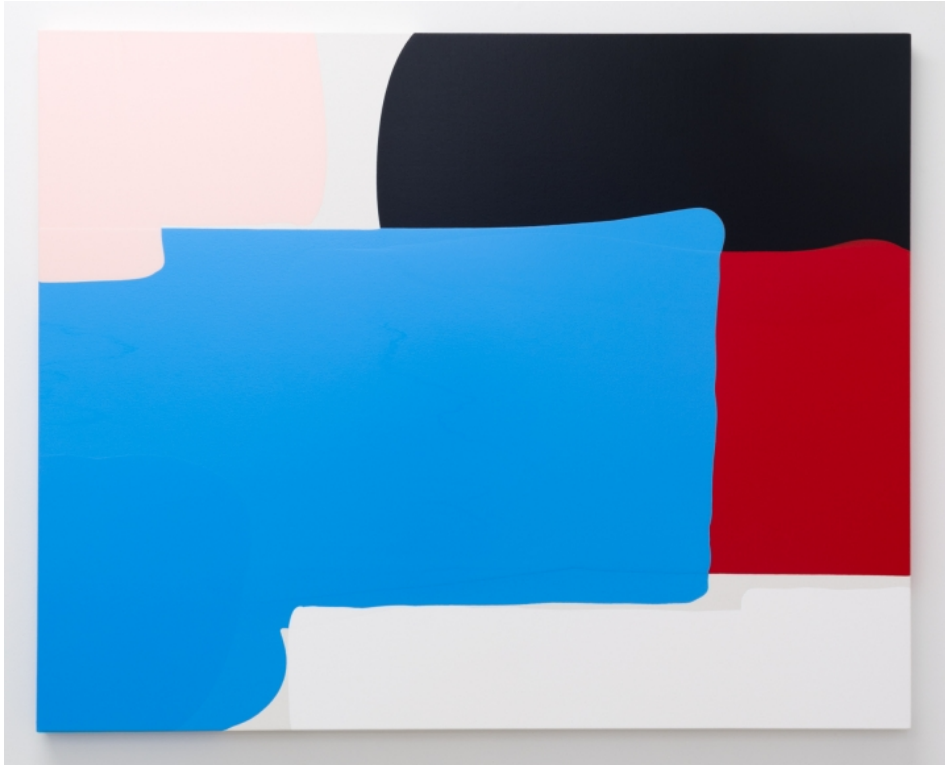
Carolanna Parlato's sporting informe

7:39 am by Editorial Assistant



Carolanna Parlato, Crossings, 2019, acrylic and pouring medium on canvas, 36 x 48 inches

Contributed by Tom McGlynn / Carolanna Parlato, to my mind, has been building up to her most recent show of paintings for about 25 years, since I first became aware of her work. The single-mindedness with which she has maintained her focus on combining gestural pouring and what might be termed “tectonic symbolism” is remarkable, yielding a suite of paintings that authoritatively summarize her narrow yet fertile fieldwork.



Carolanna Parlato Cinema, 2019, acrylic and pouring medium on canvas, 48 x 60 inches



Carolanna Parlato Foothold, 2019, acrylic and pouring medium on canvas, 44 x 51 inches

The title of the show, "Catch and Release," alludes to a specific painting but can also be read as analogous to the artist's deeply held commitment to phenomenologically built (held, caught) pictures that also depict the optical

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slippage (escape, release) of highly activated color and depth perception. And it's probably not stretching the metaphor too far to say that it also implies a sporting discretion on the part of the painter to allow a painting to be returned to its own fluid environment just beyond the reach of verbal articulation.



Carolanna Parlato, Fire in the Sky, 2019, acrylic and pouring medium on canvas, 30 x 36 inches



Installation View



Carolanna Parlato, Bloom, 2019, acrylic and pouring medium on canvas, 20 x 16 inches

Given the artist's openness to be read in various ways, it's significant that all of Parlato's titles here express a similar analogical relation to the fixity and precariousness of painterly experience. Take *Foothold* for instance, in which a basically white open space is bracketed by deep blue, red, ochre, and black swaths of liquefied pigment. The cliffhanger aspect is what one initially "reads," yet with extended viewing one gets caught in an asymmetric roundel of movement, an optically shaky ground on which no foothold can be adequately secured. What infuses this painting with perpetual life is its inherent instability, despite its concurrent classicism in incorporating an approximate Golden Section (with its very specific distribution of forms). The confluence of interrupted flows of color only adds to its contingent pictorialism.

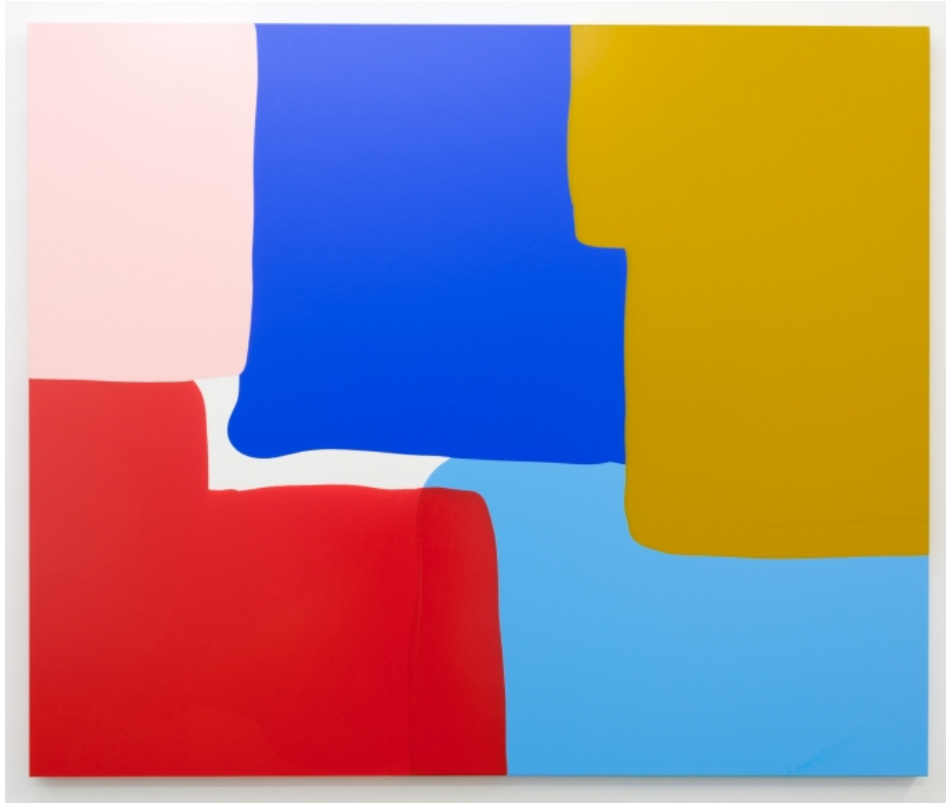
In another work, *Cinema*, Parlato reduces her palette again to four colors to include red, black, pink, and blue. These collide (or more aptly slip over and under one another, like tectonic plates) in a more pressurized space than *Foothold* since its white field is crowded out by a clash of hue in which a cerulean blue rectangular shape seemingly comes out on top. The side-to-side "tracking shot" that the painting sets in motion is primarily due to

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the blue rectangle pushing hard against a saturated red (and more vertically oriented) rectangle to its right. Parlato's titular poetics are therefore in welcome convergence with her visual syntax.



Carolanna Parlato, Double Dealing, 2019, acrylic and pouring medium on canvas,
24 x 24 inches



Carolanna Parlato, *All Sides Now*, 2019, acrylic and pouring medium on canvas, 60 x 72 inches

Paintings such as *Double Dealing* and *Bloom* tend toward the more biomorphic forms that the artist has extensively explored over the course of her long career. These hearken back to earlier works in their blobby extensions (reminiscent of Lynda Benglis or Helen Frankenthaler gestures), yet they also help to inform the more planar inclinations of paintings such as *Cinema*. Their molten informé can be seen as inherent to the genesis of the more anxious pushing and shoving of paintings such as *Wall to Wall* and *All Sides Now*, in which fields of color seem to compete for seating in an optical game of musical chairs. Ultimately, the range of gestures in this show and its authoritative reach – from loosely poured biomorphs to tightly orchestrated planes of color – build a vivid picture of the artist, highly composed in and of her painterly self.

[“Carolanna Parlato: Catch and Release,”](#) Morgan Lehman Gallery, New York, NY. Through December 14, 2019.

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