

MORGAN LEHMAN

12/13/2019

Noah Becker's



of contemporary art

DECEMBER 2019 - "THE BEST ART IN THE WORLD"

The Floatable Formations of Carolanna Parlato



Carolanna Parlato, Catch and Release, Installation view. All images courtesy Morgan Lehman Gallery.

Carolanna Parlato (<http://www.carolannaparlato.com/>): *Catch and Release*

Morgan Lehman Gallery (<http://www.morganlehmangallery.com/>)

November 7 - December 14, 2019

By **CORI HUTCHINSON**, December 2019

Shapely and shingled, Carolanna Parlato's acrylic paintings hang with a fruity energy at her solo Morgan Lehman exhibition. The title of the show, *Catch and Release*, zeroes in on the porous canvas surface in each piece, briefly netting the slippery floatables within, and then dispersing them to the air. Parlato, a Brooklyn-based painter, has developed an observably contained and consistent practice throughout her career. Here, she shows recent arrangements defined by a delicate, concise, and stacked composition using a honed color-pouring technique.



Carolanna Parlato, Puzzler, 2019. Acrylic and pouring medium on canvas, 30h x 40w in.

Puzzler exaggerates the jigsaw illusion of Parlato's work with a fresh and fluid lavender, black, opaque and filmy navy, and peek of teal directly in the center. This combination pushes the white (negation) at the bottom of the frame to the foreground, asserting its own weight in the puzzle like a toothy whimsy (a jigsaw piece with a recognizable rather than abstract shape). As with Wikipedia's three-dimensional puzzle logo (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia_logo), the rectangular puzzle is and is not complete by Parlato, perpetually morphing under the conditions of perception, knowledge, and light.



Carolanna Parlato, Foothold, 2019. Acrylic and pouring medium on canvas, 42h x 40w in.

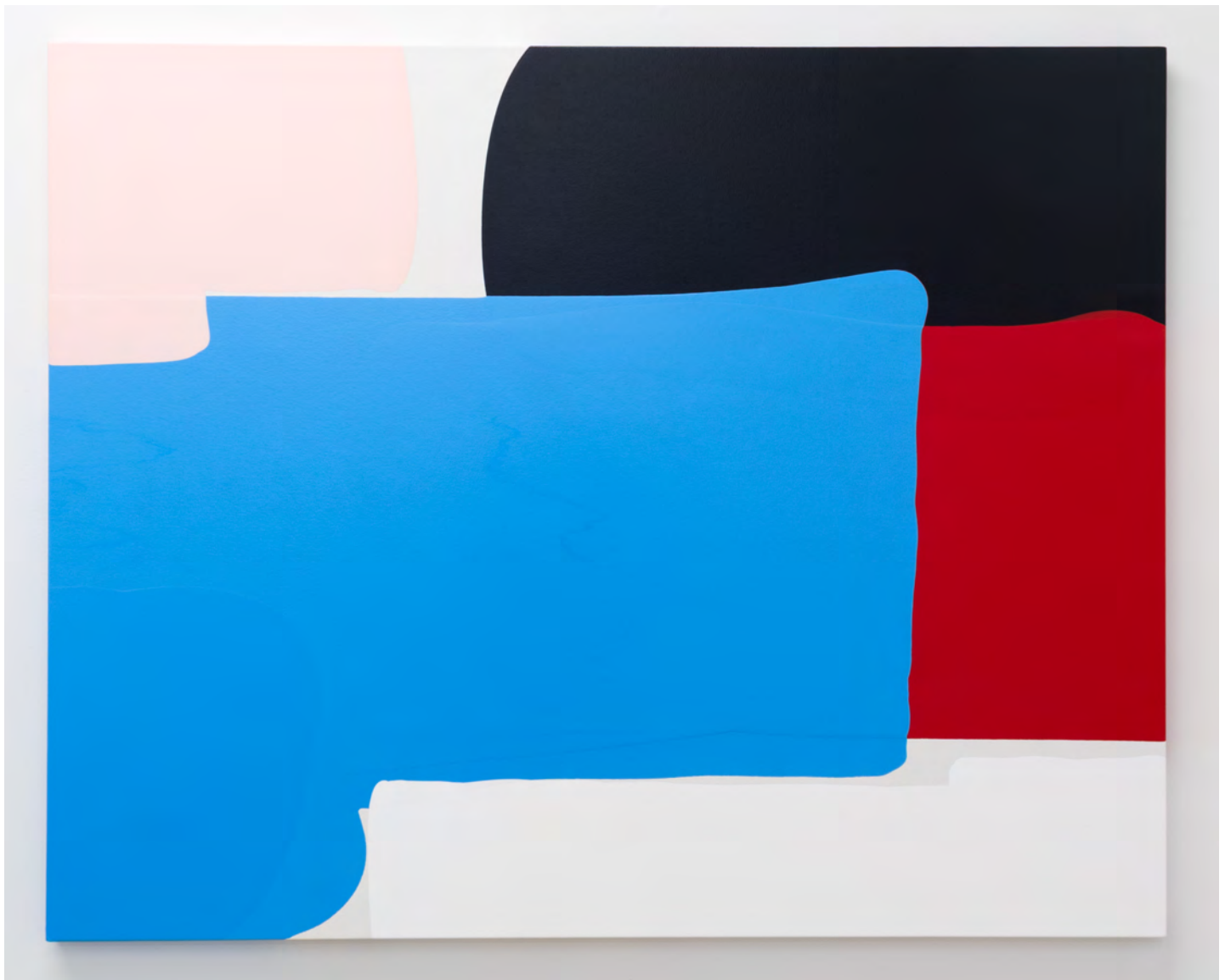
Foothold disturbs the equilibrium of its neighbor *Puzzler*, crowding long orange, mustard, and black on the right to balance a languid teardrop-shaped continent of blue on the left. Separating these two color formations is an elbow channel of white. The title's invocation of abseiling or a figurative tether is attached not to the acrylic shapes, but to the continuous white snaking through them. If the arc of Parlato's show can be imagined through the lens of tectonic Pangea, this piece represents a late break-up position. It may be likened to a glossier version of Helen Frankenthaler's *White Portal* color field painting.



Carolanna Parlato, Catch and Release, 2019. Acrylic and pouring medium on canvas, 42h x 40w in.

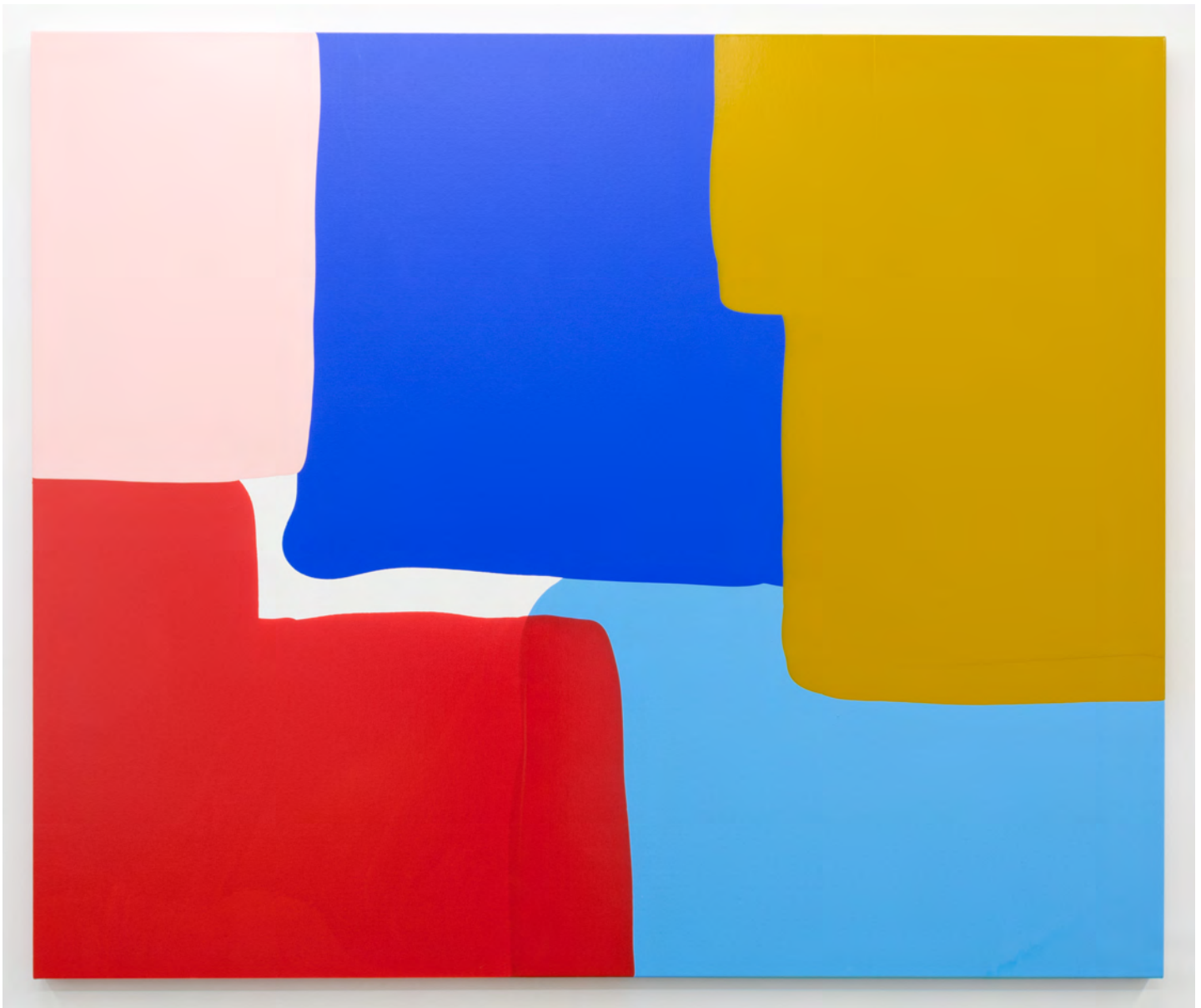
Like *Puzzler*, *Catch and Release* has a navel of teal wash. The piece, holding the title of the exhibition, develops a thesis for Parlato's current work. From email correspondence with Parlato, I learned that her studio is located in Gowanus, Brooklyn. Before becoming aware of this information, I associated the economy of shape in the artist's spanning work with the recreational and conservation-oriented leisure activity of fishing often described by the phrase "catch and release." Further,

the palette of *Catch and Release*, specifically, appeared to me as an acidic combination of green, black, yellow, and blue, perhaps in reference to the polluted Gowanus Canal (locally nicknamed “Lavender Lake” after a combination of raw sewage and waste from coal plants and soap factories was deposited there in the 19th century). In this context, the shapes of Carolanna Parlato’s work function as a combination of extremophiles, microbial life comforted by the niche conditions of polluted water, and the planar environment itself. *Catch and Release* becomes not only a strategy of economy, but of preservation as well, exploring the organic beyond the realm of what is known and, by extension, named. This remains speculative.



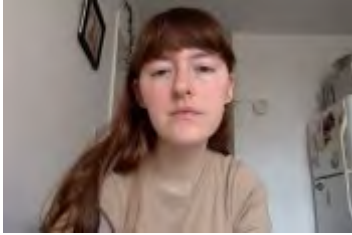
Carolanna Parlato, Cinema, 2019. Acrylic and pouring medium on canvas, 48h x 60w in.

All Sides Now, which shares a title with a jazz album by guitarist Pat Martino, is a blockier piece grouped with *Cinema*. Both resemble a game of jellied Tetris, shifting not only vertically but horizontally as well by their own inertia. A closer inspection of *Cinema* reveals curved blush and black half-forms edged out by the rectilinear blue and red shapes that overlap them, creating raised ridges. The crowdedness of these two pieces amounts to sculptural compounds with mobile-like physicality. Their meshing alludes to the sheer intersection of influence which produces abstract expressionism. While some work in the show appears candied in this way, we are reminded that it is not straightforwardly edible. The green force plunging through the surface of *Catch and Release* toward purer blue depths suggests a hybrid taste, combining the aforementioned fruitiness with a toxic plume.



Carolanna Parlato, All Sides Now, 2019. Acrylic and pouring medium on canvas, 60h x 72w in.

In the spirit of the 1950s color field painters, Parlato uses the technique of water-based acrylic-pouring to develop a fluid and spontaneous mark-making which follows a narrative beyond the edge of the canvas. With some pieces so globular and lava lamplike, and others entropic and architectural, this exhibition summons the zest and subtle irregularity of Vivian Springford's stainwork and gestural tact of Helen Frankenthaler. Come to the work with an appetite for color and lightness, and perhaps visit in both the day and early evening to observe the spectrum of sheen at each ephemeral interval. **WM**



CORI HUTCHINSON

Cori Hutchinson is a poet, watercolorist, and library assistant living in Brooklyn.

[view all articles from this author \(/contributors/cori-hutchinson/1019\)](/contributors/cori-hutchinson/1019)