

# MORGAN LEHMAN

535 West 22nd Street, New York, New York 10011

## Jenn Dierdorf

*Half Held By The Night*

June 23 – July 29, 2016

Opening Reception: Thursday, June 23, 6 – 8 pm



“And in your pleasure, find eternal pain” - Aldous Huxley’s translation of Charles Baudelaire’s “Les Fleurs du Mal – Delphine and Hippolyte,” 1929

Morgan Lehman Gallery is pleased to present *Half Held By The Night*, an exhibition of new paintings by Jenn Dierdorf in Gallery 2.

The series of dimly lit flower portraits are rooted in Dutch vanitas and still-life painting, both visually and symbolically. As a genre, flower painting has existed for hundreds of years and has a rich and complicated history. Among its depictions of bright bursting buds and withering papery petals, these images carry notions of gender, sex, sexuality, emotion, life and death. Dierdorf’s dark abstractions are no exception. Though clearly paintings of flowers, her images appear half-formed, dissolving into space and shadows. Numerous layers of paint carve out as well as flatten space. Simple gestural marks distort imagery while also creating a graphic, even garish quality. The exhibition includes works on panel and works on paper.

*Half Held By The Night* speaks to darkness in both a literal and figurative sense, provoking feelings of comfort and loss simultaneously. Dierdorf’s flowers are engulfed by darkness, where the light remains caught between being extinguished and being ignited.

“This grass is very dark to be from the white heads of old mothers, darker than the colorless beards of old men. Dark to come from under the faint red roofs of mouths” – Walt Whitman, “Leaves of Grass”

Jenn Dierdorf was born in Michigan City, Indiana in 1978. She received her B.F.A. in Sculpture from the University of Kansas and her M.F.A. from the University of Connecticut. She has been the artist in residence at several arts programs including the Virginia Center for Creative Arts (Amherst, VA), the Contemporary Arts Center (Troy, NY), the Vermont Studio Center (Johnson, VT), and the Wassaic Art Project (Wassaic, NY). Her work has been exhibited widely, including exhibitions at Kathleen Cullen Fine Art (New York, NY), Lancaster Museum of Art (Lancaster, PA), Minnesota National Print Biennial at the University of Minnesota (Minneapolis, MN), Art Space (New Haven, CT), Kimberly Klark (Brooklyn, NY) and Cindy Rucker Gallery, (New York City, NY).