

## Anna Membrino *Exteriors*



January 28, 2021 – March 6, 2021

Morgan Lehman is pleased to present “Exteriors”, Anna Membrino’s first exhibition with the gallery and her debut solo show in New York City.

Membrino’s paintings deal first and foremost with issues of time and memory. Though the imagery in her work has become increasingly abstract in recent years, clear indicators of the artist’s interest in the tradition of studio-based observational painting are apparent. Seductive, curvilinear geometries and planes of glowing color are not detached from the real, but instead feel governed by the visual cues of objects in space: gravity, shadows, reflected light, and modeling. In this way, each work presents a formal situation that is in some ways akin to the shallow pictorial space of still life, complete with legible figure-ground relationships.

To achieve this effect, Membrino creates small colored paper studio maquettes from which to observe and paint. These maquettes are of course not rendered verbatim, but provide enough clear observational reference points to help guide the paintings as they develop. Membrino’s first interaction with each work begins with the performative pouring of gallons of diluted paint across a bare canvas, and she uses the spontaneous energy of the pour as a foundation on which to construct her imagery. Through meditative and highly articulated labor the artist slowly edits the final forms into a convincing three-dimensionality. As viewers, we observe the inherent movement of the poured paint passages, flowing and transitory, and their recording of a certain moment. We also notice the juxtaposition of this “fast” process with the slower, more contemplative pace of Membrino’s rendering and of the images themselves: elongated shadows and long, arcing color gradients suggest the lingering of light and gradual passage of time. In the artist’s words, “light becomes the sole storyteller in my paintings.”

There is something uncanny about the experience of seeing Membrino’s paintings, perhaps because they suggest both the conditions of real-life observation as well as the more disembodied semiotics and formal concerns of abstraction. In some sense, the works straddle both worlds and offer a surprising hybrid visual language. Situating themselves within our fast-paced visual culture, the paintings of Anna Membrino ask for (and reward) slow looking from their audience.

**Anna Membrino** was born in Maryland in 1986. She holds an MFA from Southern Methodist University and a BA and BFA from The University of North Florida. She has been awarded residencies at Can Serrat in El Bruc, Spain; Sanskriti Foundation in New Delhi, India; and Radius Workshops in Grambois, France. Membrino’s work has been featured in *New American Paintings*, *Juxtapose*, *Patron Magazine*, *Paper City Magazine*, and *D Magazine*. Her work is included in prestigious private and public collections such as Neiman Marcus, UT Southwestern Hospital, Gardere Wynne Sewell, and Fidelity Investments. The artist lives and works in Dallas, Texas.