

Mary Laube

I Will Name Myself in the Dark

May 14 – June 15, 2024



Morgan Lehman Gallery is thrilled to present our first solo presentation of paintings by Mary Laube, *I Will Name Myself in the Dark*. Laube excavates her own cultural narratives to allow us access to her complex transnational life between Korea and the United States. She challenges us to reconsider reductive colonial perspectives by visually depicting the formation of memory, culture, and identity as a dynamic and destabilizing process.

In her color-drenched works on wood panels, abstraction and representation coexist, reflecting patterns and forms observed by Laube during visits to museums in her birth city of Seoul. Korean wrapping cloths, ink stones, Buddhist statues, and the imagery of folk paintings are abstracted and flattened out across each picture plane. Yet, through a careful manipulation of color and value, her arrangements of shapes manage to also ascend toward a rich illusory space.

Throughout the exhibition, cultural allusions to both the United States and Korea are intricately layered and synthesized into compositions that challenge our sense of certainty and equilibrium. Laube's stunning optical vibrations of color, in particular, serve to keep each composition in a constant state of motion and render palpable her own feelings of perpetual disequilibrium. Every painting on view is imbued with a deeply internalized understanding of displacement, reunion, decolonization, memorial, and personal myth.

Mary Laube (born Seoul, Korea, 1985) is an Associate Professor at University of Tennessee, Knoxville. She received her MFA (2012) from The University of Iowa, and her BFA (2009) from Illinois State University. Past exhibitions include the Knoxville Museum of Art, Ortega y Gasset Projects (NYC), VCU Qatar (Doha), Monaco (St Louis), The Spring Break Art Show (NYC), and Coop Gallery (Nashville). Artist residencies include Yaddo, Wassaic Project, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Vermont Studio Center, and Stiwdeo Maelor in Corris, Wales. Past publications include Art Maze Mag, Maake Magazine, and New American Paintings. In 2019, Mary received the Contemporary Visual Art Bronze Award from AHL Foundation. She is a co-founder of the Warp Whistle Project, a collaborative duo with composer Paul Schuette. Together, they make work that merges kinetic stage sets with music performance.