

Brackett Creek EDITIONS



Ashley Wertheimer

First Light

January 15 - February 19, 2022

Brackett Creek Editions NY, Units 209 & 210

Brackett Creek is proud to present our newest edition by Ashley Wertheimer, "First Light". This reproduction of Wertheimer's 2020 painting by the same name is a 4-color silkscreen on a dyed heavyweight long-sleeve shirt, produced in an unnumbered edition of 26.

The exhibition is comprised of the edition and six tufted wool and acrylic yarn paintings, including *First Light*. Viewed chronologically, the works trace Wertheimer's painterly evolution through the contemporary craft medium and its dialogue around color. Both the edition and the paintings flatten the abstract language that Wertheimer had rigorously developed in oil on canvas over the last ten years before moving to Montana. This abstract language contracts the surface clues which assign foreground and background.

Ad Reinhardt declared, "It is more difficult to write or talk about abstract painting than about any other painting because the content is not in a subject matter or story, but in the actual painting activity."

Compared to the potentially infinite layers of oil on canvas, the "flattened" tufted works have two layers of "painting activity": a marker drawing on the muslin backing and acrylic yarn tufted through the muslin via an industrial tufting gun. This reduced activity pushes the conversation of content toward questions of "why" the paintings were made as opposed to "how". "Why" the medium, "why" abstraction, "why" the color, "why" now?

The easiest answer to all the "why's" is a sense of community; the search for which over the last couple of years has become a pertinent "painting activity" for most artists and is something that Wertheimer has struggled to keep afloat over the long distances from her previous studio-inclined peers or develop anew in rural Montana. The craft community welcomes newcomers and thrives online through its evolving but clearly defined questions of relevance (i.e. if a color or pattern has appeared in the world of fast fashion it is dead for the cutting-edge makers and designers). Works are relevant or irrelevant based on their timeliness. Art doesn't have these questions; it focuses on timelessness, and abstraction aims to be the least corruptible form of timelessness.

The search for community and the notion that an artist can make work through the abandonment of alterity is present in the evolution of Wertheimer's paintings. They straddle the gap of relevance between the two worlds—first by abandoning painterly decisions, then by reinstating them to bring the communities' potential dialogue together; craft with art concerns for the tufting world, art with craft concerns for the art world, and perhaps together seen as inseparable by the Montana locals who make no distinction whatsoever.