

## Keltie Ferris

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March 29 - May 13, 2023

Morán Morán is pleased to announce Keltie Ferris' second exhibition with the gallery and the artist's first in Mexico City. Titled +++c+o+n+t+a+c+t+,,, this exhibition presents seven new paintings that are of two different series, including a site-specific wall drawing. Four vibrant paintings compositionally break from a heavy-knit grid, and the other three, as well as the wall drawing, make use of delicately flowing line work rendered over a blank expanse. Coming from dissimilar directions, these two series exemplify Ferris' ability to adeptly shift within his own practice from one method of expression to another.

With the grid-based abstractions, the artist interrupts a geometrical system by employing various shapes and marks that loosely reference blooming flowers or explosions of light. Through a palette that seems to include the spectrum in its most potent hues, these works toy with balancing excess and restraint alongside exaggerating the tension between organic and orderly forms. The figure/ground complications that arise from Ferris' color combinations and layering of various paint applications (sprayed and brushed) are an achievement in illusion as the eye searches for visual hierarchy. There is a performance borne by this technique, and the compositional trope of leaving the center of the image empty, further insists on the illusion because it brings our attention to the frame.

Sharing a more obvious lane with performance, the line-work paintings are ethereal yet undeniably physical. Here, Ferris allows the hand to be very direct and we witness the aftereffect of pastel pigments moving with speed over a white gessoed canvas. These intuitive and quick images feel like a pure translation of the fluidity inherent within the natural world, of grasses in wind, spirogyra in water. His colorful threads dance with an unchoreographed ease, becoming even more spectral because he returns to his formalized process of erasure by making rhythmic swipes across the lines. This process lends another conversation to the figure/ground relationship and the resulting blur creates its own abstract phenomenon.

Responding to the unique architecture of the gallery space, Ferris executed a wall-drawing that thematically converses with the canvases. With this ephemeral gesture, the artist articulates the physicality and spontaneous essence of the line works. The cohesion of this exhibition lies in the artist's effort toward experimentation – images confirmed through the act of repetition and how gaps between gestures are not so much negative space but rather moments of potential connection.

Keltie Ferris is best known for patterned paintings that use acrylic and oil, spray gun and brushes, as well as erasure and impasto to create energetic abstractions that vibrate with contrasts of medium application, color combinations, and compositional strategies. In his early work, he experimented with pixelated backgrounds and blurred foregrounds to tease at depth perception; now, he builds-up thick areas of relief to add a dimension, although he redacts the process as well by wiping away areas of the imagery. Ferris continuously expands his relationship to painting, both in the way he handles the medium but also how his work relates to the history of the genre, considering the relationship of an artist's identity to their output of imagery.

Keltie Ferris (b. 1977, Louisville, KY) lives and works in Brooklyn and Woodstock, NY. He graduated with a BFA from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in 2004, and received an MFA from the Yale School of Art in 2006. Solo exhibitions include *\*O\*P\*E\*N\** at The Speed Art Museum in Louisville, KY (2018); *Body Prints and Paintings* at the University Art Museum at SUNY Albany, Albany, NY (2016); *Keltie Ferris: Doomsday Boogie* at the Santa Monica Museum of Art, Santa Monica, CA (2014); and *Man Eaters* at the Kemper Museum, Kansas City, MO (2009-10). His works have been included in group exhibitions at institutions such as: Museum of Contemporary Art, Jacksonville, FL; Saatchi Gallery, London, UK; Contemporary Arts Museum of Houston, Houston, TX; The Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, NY; Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY; the Indianapolis Museum of Contemporary Art, Indianapolis, IN; and The Kitchen, New York, NY. In 2014, he received the Rosenthal Family Foundation Award in Painting by the Academy of Arts and Letters. Ferris' work is included in public collections at The Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, MO; The Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art (Oppenheimer Collection), Overland Park, KS; The Saatchi Gallery, London, UK; The Speed Art Museum, Louisville, KY; and Amorepacific Museum of Art, Seoul, Korea.