

Michael Benevento is pleased to exhibit the painting-based work of Polly Apfelbaum and Dona Nelson in a two-person presentation.

Both known for pushing the boundaries of the medium, introducing new materials and expanding the definition of the frame/stretcher, Polly Apfelbaum and Dona Nelson are a harmonious pairing of prolific and joyful painting liberated from the wall. The exhibition will include works by both artists that are consistent with longtime investigations in removing painting from traditional stretcher constructs and thrusting it into spatial conditions. Though this concept was originally achieved through Minimalism, both Apfelbaum and Nelson's offerings are noticeably sans the mechanical and clinical obstinacy of the Minimal aesthetic. Rather, both artists seem more connected to processes influenced by Feminist production, and the less macho moments between Abstract Expressionism and Proto-Pop.

Apfelbaum's newest "fallen painting" floor collages are undulating amalgams of cut and dyed fabric. The artist's signature fabric material, crushed 4 way stretch synthetic velvet, is used to produce the sprawling floor arrangements, with small pieces of the material meticulously cut into shapes around dye spots and clusters. Often titled after musical inspirations, Apfelbaum's "splats" are rhythmic while avoiding rigidity, inhabiting space like organic growth. Her hanging ceramic beads offer a juxtaposition of tighter rhythm that traces a geometric connection to the interior architecture in the gallery. The small beads are hand-painted with some of the quirky freedom that characterizes her impermanent fabric arrangements, but the bead installation follows a uniform scale, height, and spacing logic, with beads dropping in parallel and perpendicular lines from the grid of ceiling beams from thin, nearly invisible strings that alter and direct the flow of the viewing space.

Nelson will be contributing both brand new works and works dating from the 1990's. Several of the exhibited works will feature Nelson's consistent interest in the idea of the 2-sided painting, and the various ways to mount a work of that type to make both sides actively visible. The process by which Nelson comes to a two-sided work involves a delving into material with the faith that an image or desirable abstract composition will surface. Sometimes results emerge that are representational, but certainly not graphic, and never disconnected from the physicality of the painted medium. Similarly, Nelson's titles will at times describe a material condition like *"Yellow Wood"* and will sometimes evoke something more narrative like *"Hair Conditioning"* or *"Shoe Painting"*. In working the two sides of a canvas, Nelson eventually decides on a "front" and "back" and then permanently stretches the canvas accordingly. While both sides may have started with similar palettes or working conditions, the differing results are forever connected back-to-back. For our viewing of the lively

and egoless paintings, Nelson provides clever wall, ceiling, and floor mounts that stand or hang paintings with both sides visible.

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