

LUBOV

The Happiness Project: Episode 1: Acquaintance

Linda Daniels, Marilyn Lerner, Jill Levine

Organized by José Freire

June 28, 2025–August 17, 2025

The Happiness Project is a series of ten exhibitions to be held at a diverse group of galleries over the next five years. The inaugural iteration, **Episode One**, will take place at Lubov from June 28 to August 17, 2025. The show juxtaposes work by three artists: **Linda Daniels, Marilyn Lerner** and **Jill Levine**. Organized by **José Freire**, this is his first contemporary art venture since the closure of his Team Gallery five years ago.

A reasonable question at an art exhibition might be, “Are you acquainted with the work of such-and-such?” One searches for recognition in another — the shared acknowledgement of a line, a gesture, some sensation — manufacturing from the inanimate a human connection, a familial experience. In this exchange, the viewer not only identifies an artistic practice, they bond with a kindred spirit.

Acquaintance also sits alongside friendship, its easier comrade. It remains jovial, incandescent, avoiding the dramatic pitfalls of its more serious neighbor. Handshakes and kisses are exchanged but hardships are avoided. In this way, people come together, move apart, come together again. **Acquaintance**, as an exhibition, functions as a reunion for its three artists and its curator as they had worked together extensively in the late 80s and early 90s.

Linda Daniels is represented by three of her dynamic abstractions, which begin with the cobbling together and dissection of circular forms that end up as mysterious shapes rendered in pulsating colors on sensuous white grounds. Her paintings show an abiding commitment to formalism but deliver their all with pop/op flavorings. Marilyn Lerner will include three of her tight, geometric fantasias, organized around dynamic tensions between color and form. Like outpourings of code and data, they appear highly calculated. As much as Lerner’s paintings may call to mind such vaunted art historical antecedents as Hilma af Klint, one might also recall a console glimpsed on an episode of **BLACK MIRROR** or the eye of the **HAL 9000**. Jill Levine presents her painted sculptures of interlocking, puzzle-like shapes where line, color and form are shared by the applied paint and the shapes on which it rests. Alongside these, Levine will also show work from her “Tablets” series, paintings rendered on prepared panels not much larger than smartphones.

Any group exhibition is an opportunity to encourage comparisons, however, these three artists, while having so much in common, are each mining a distinctive strain of abstraction. For all their shared DNA, this is a group of highly iconoclastic figures, their individuated approaches precise and distinct.

– José Freire, May 2025.

Daniels, Lerner and **Levine** have been actively exhibiting their work for nearly five decades. One can find them represented in numerous public collections, including the Whitney Museum of American Art and The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. They have been the subject of articles and reviews in most major art publications, among them *Art in America*, *Artforum*, *FlashArt*, *Artnews*, *Sculpture Magazine*, and *The New Art Examiner*. Locally, one has been able to read about their exhibitions in *The New York Times*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *The New Yorker*, *Time Out New York*, *Hyperallergic*, and *Bomb*. Daniels’ most recent solo was held at Five Car Garage in Santa Monica, CA, Lerner’s at New York’s Kate Werble Gallery and at Sprüth Magers in London, Levine’s at High Noon Gallery in New York City.

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