

To describe a feeling or sensation that lacks external perceivable qualities is something of an impossibility but doesn't preclude making an effort. A tip of the tongue sensation arises and then a grasping; utterances or perhaps a string of words emerge brings one closer to perceiving an immediate and certain character. Moments later, conclusiveness disappears, felt shapes linger.

- M.L. 2025

The Green Gallery is pleased to present *Tip-of-the-Tongue*, a series of new paintings by Margaret Lee. This is the artist's fifth exhibition at the gallery continuing a thirteen year relationship. The nine paintings that physically occupy the gallery invite viewers to join the artist in a cognitive place. The works offer an immediate source of visual pleasure. They eschew something immediately namable, suggesting they are on the verge of knowing. As the exhibition title suggests, the work expresses a desire to communicate a pending utterance; not by way of words themselves but via the artist's painterly language.

"The tip of the tongue" describes anatomy but manifests as a mental quandary. To sit at the tip of the tongue is to negotiate an impossibility. Lee's active searching and present attention are coalescing as much as dissolving; felt through paint where her felt shapes linger. Fixed before us, gestural movement wanders butting up against the boundaries of the rectangle. There is containment as much as release, a determined *forming* to regard.

A broad range of blues mix and mingle atop Italian yellow ochre underpaintings with the linen being revealed at times. Lee's surface hues ungulate, implying something of nature but also civic. The application is too opaque to suggest atmosphere but there is a feeling of spaciousness. The brushstrokes map a topography of literal space on the picture plane, and suggest a cognitive space. This evidence of the artist working-through, an attempt to find or retrieve *some* thing. Formations become distinct at times; a figure or a loose notation of grid. Others present space in its ambiguity. The paintings ebb and flow moving one to the next; a pulsing inward and outward, as vocabulary recirculates.

Lee's paintings do have one nameable, recognizable moment: dots. There are circles spanning across each work. The move is multifaceted against the paintings themselves. On the one hand, they are a throwback to earlier moments in the artist's career for which she utilized appropriated polkadot patterns to fill and/or wrap around referential forms. Here, the mark is clearly read but somewhat ambiguous, in a state of emerging out of and receding back to the gestural field. The dot hits as a punctuation, calling assertiveness into the present. The dot also feels like *dot dot dot* (...) a suggestion to keep going, that Lee may not be finished yet and is leading us onward.

If the *Tip-of-the-Tongue* is a movement back into the mind, it is also a movement outward. We witness an attempt to put into language something not formed, because perhaps we do not know how else to articulate it. Lee's paintings are working through what is not yet understood. This is felt experience, a negotiation with the present and being present; however one may choose to describe.

The Green Gallery 1500 N Farwell Ave, Milwaukee, WI 53202

Please join us for a reception with the artist, Friday, September 12th from 5-7pm.