

anna ostoya  
oceanic feelings  
tegenbosch-  
vanvreden,  
nov 11, 2019 –  
jan 4, 2020

opening: friday,  
november 22

I've made these new paintings for us to look at, to give our ourselves penetrative pleasures that vibrate through our retinas deep down the guts. These are all for our eyes, and hearts and feet that hopefully will finally rise above the ground.

The artist draws the outlines of her and her model's body on paper. She photographs the resulting drawings and manipulates them further to achieve desirable compositions. She transfers the drawings to canvas and starts to paint, developing the outlines into abstract formations reminiscent of coral reefs, celestial objects and internal organs. In the extensive process of searching for the final image, she is only half-conscious of what appears

on canvas. Most body parts become unrecognizable. On some canvases, hands, still recognizable, seem to touch and to penetrate the painted forms and the surface of the canvas itself. The rainbow colors are vivid, the handling of paint is soft.

I grappled a long time with these paintings to find the right path. I began with a feeling of what I wanted to do. I had a plan for the outlines and I had a vision for the colors. But I couldn't just go ahead and execute a painting. That would be making an illustration or a design. I had to go through the process of searching for the right intensity and depth of every part of the canvas, of painting and overpainting, of falling into false effects and of committing simple blunders, of exploding and scratching the surface and of wasting too much time on meticulous color renderings. I was in no position to plan how long a particular canvas would take me to finish it. The final image would reveal itself to me as if by itself, at first behind a veil. But once I could spot it, it would blossom and with each layer intensify. That's how it has been with my work.

The paintings are an attempt to paint a human body, a body that feels and is felt as if in a state of primal wonder about itself and the world. Such a state would allow freedom from definition or categorization by sex, race, or age, and enable new modes

of creativity to feel, to think and to act. The intensity of this idea is manifested in the intensity of the painting process, with its endless possibilities of nuance in color, tone, shape and depth. A desire for such exploration has been a recurring subject in the artist's work.

I could tell you a few stories about these works. For example, the one about the term "oceanic feeling", which relates to some mysticism of ecstasy, or a psycho-analytic theory about a state in which we are one with the world. But it was conceived by bearded men, or gods, and for the moment I'd like to forget they've ever existed. Another story would include images of other works by other artists from the past, like Sonia Delaunay, who gave me so much retinal pleasure. I could tell you a story from my life when I inhaled petrol and spiraled down a colorful ribbon. But let me forget that, too. Let's forget about all of the past and all we know as an experiment. Is that possible? What will happen?

In *Oceanic Feelings*, Ostoya presents a new series of paintings and collages on canvas. A series of six smaller paintings is accompanied by six collages that the artist made from the rags she used for cleaning her brushes and pallets while painting. Their monochromatic arrangements correspond with the colors of

the paintings. The large painting is also accompanied by a large, polychromatic collage made of the rags she used while painting it. All of the works come from the same process yet deliver different aesthetic experiences, one from a careful soft handling of paint and the other from an accidental expressive gesture. The exhibition is an invitation to prolonged looking to feel the colors, shapes and brushstrokes.

Anna Ostoya, born in Kraków, lives and works in New York. Her work has been shown at Tate St. Ives, the 2015 Lyon Biennial, at the Museum of Modern Art, the Power Plant Toronto, the CCS Bard College, Manifesta 7 Rovereto, Lisson Gallery, Kunsthau Baselland, and the Second Athens Biennial. She has had solo exhibitions at Zacheta National Gallery, La Kunsthalle Mulhouse, CCA Kronika, and with her galleries: Bortolami, New York; tegenboschvanvreden, Amsterdam; and Silberkuppe, Berlin. She studied at the Städelschule in Frankfurt/M and the Parsons School in Paris and attended the Whitney Independent Study Program in New York. "Oceanic Feelings" is the third exhibition of the artist at the tegenboschvanvreden gallery.