

Victoria Gitman

Everything Is Surface: Twenty Years of Painting

April 2, 2022 - May 7, 2022



François Ghebaly is proud to announce Victoria Gitman, *Everything is Surface: Twenty Years of Painting*, opening in Los Angeles on April 2 and remaining on view through May 7, 2022.

The exhibition represents the most comprehensive survey of Victoria Gitman's work to date, including 27 paintings and drawings spanning the years 2001 through 2022. The selection includes recent works from the artist's studio as well as loans from private collections across the country.

Victoria Gitman's deceptively diminutive oil paintings—typically less than ten inches on any side—depict closely observed surfaces: dyed furs of vintage handbags, geometric tessellations of sequins or beads, glinting costume jewelry. Each painting is months in the making and a product of deep looking and careful craft, bestowing an auratic quality on these objects of kitsch. Sometimes cropped close and sometimes resting on monochromatic surfaces, they carry a sense of weight and tactility, luring the viewer into a close proximity where vision and touch begin to merge.

Writing in a guest essay for the exhibition, New York-based independent curator Debra Singer notes this striking fusion of the senses:

Our modes of looking decelerate as the brain grapples with mixed messages about textures commingling with temperatures, shadows with light. Her paintings direct our vision, even as they transform it, provoking a dramatic slowness of seeing that is a welcome refuge.

Gitman frequently engages the history of painting in her own sly, subtle ways. Despite demonstrating a mastery of figurative depiction, her choices of subject, composition, and color frequently evoke the history of twentieth century abstraction. Ellsworth Kelly, Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko—these giants of non-objective painting become reanimated in the furs and sequins of Gitman’s handbags, an inversion of representation, scale, and machismo. Another series similarly addresses an earlier history of representation, this time in exquisite oil on board renderings of Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres’s graphite on paper drawings. These paintings cross wires between mediums, confounding the eye and exposing what Gitman calls “the understructures of style.”

The title of the exhibition, *Everything is Surface*, is a line from John Ashbery’s poem “Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror.” The phrase reflects Gitman’s career-long exploration of surface, both as material reality and conceptual field. Her work blends a focus on the seductive surfaces of objects and an attention to the pictorial surface itself, the skin of the painting. In each work, Gitman aligns the represented surface and the picture plane, bringing to the foreground the tactile desire implicit in the experience of viewing paintings.

Victoria Gitman was born in 1972 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Her works are held in the public collections of numerous museums, including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA); the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Pérez Art Museum, Miami; the Detroit Institute of Arts; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, among others. In 2015 she was the subject of a mid-career retrospective at the Pérez Art Museum, curated by René Morales. Most recently, her paintings were included in La Trienal at El Museo del Barrio, New York. Solo exhibitions of her work include Garth Greenan, New York; Tomio Koyama, Tokyo; Las Vegas Art Museum; David Nolan, New York; Daniel Weinberg, Los Angeles; and Bass Museum of Art, Miami. She lives and works near Miami in Hallandale Beach, Florida.