

GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE



KATHLEEN JACOBS
LUMEN

07.09.2023 – 21.10.2023
Opening September 7th from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Press kit

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Artist's quotes

« My work is born from the collaboration between the trees, the natural environment, and myself, but it's not about trees; they are abstract paintings. The lines and patterns are important, nothing more, nothing less».

« I strengthened my body core and hand by practicing and using the entire body to move the brush. I think that calligraphy is an invaluable training method for all artists »

« I realized that the lines and patterns of the bark were very similar to forms found in nature. Clouds in the sky, waves in the ocean, flowing rivers... For me, trees are a template for the law of nature »

« I hope my work inspires people to let their imagination fly freely, following the canvas's lines, colors, and textures as a guide »

« I've spent many years outside painting and making woodcuts. After some time, I realized that I should use what was there (physically) to make the work... It was an interesting experience, collaborating with trees, weather, and time to paint these images. I allowed the surface to speak for itself»

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Biography



Portrait de l'artiste. Photo : Lisa Vollmer

Born in Aspen, Colorado, in 1958, Kathleen Jacobs attended Pine Manor College in Massachusetts, then obtained a degree in graphic design at Politecnico di Milano. There, she met the artist Huang Heiman, with whom she moved to China, where she lived between Beijing and Hong Kong from 1984 to 1988. There, she studied alongside Heiman's father, the Chinese artist Huang Yongyu, a master of traditional Chinese painting and calligraphy. After her return to the United States in 1988, she began exploring encaustic printing, ceramics and welding at the Anderson Ranch Arts Center in Snowmass Village, Colorado. Upon her return to Massachusetts in 2000, she pursued her artistic projects and her activity as an aerobatic pilot. Kathleen Jacob's major project *Clearing* in Hillsdale, New York, a project of over sixty five works, spanned three years from 2010 to 2013 and involved an installation in a walnut orchard. The *Echoes* project is currently underway at TurnPark Art

Space in West Stockbridge, Massachusetts. She is also currently engaged in an installation of thirty three canvases at "The Mount" in Lenox, Massachusetts, a National Historic Site and the former residence of Edith Wharton (the first woman to win a Pulitzer Prize in 1921). Her work has been shown in numerous galleries and museums, including solo exhibitions at the Aspen Art Museum in Aspen, Colorado, and group shows such as the 2014 exhibition *Love Story: The Anne and Wolfgang Tizze Collection* at the Belvedere Museum in Vienna. Kathleen Jacobs lives and works in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. *LUMEN* is her second exhibition at Galerie Karsten Greve, but the first at our Parisian gallery.

Chronological milestones

1958	Born in Aspen, Colorado, USA
1980	BA à la Pine Manor College, Boston, MA, USA
1984	MA à la Scuola Politecnica di Milano, Milan, Italia
1984-1988	Lives in Beijing and Hong Kong. Learns Chinese and studies calligraphy alongside her father-in-law, the Chinese artist Huang Yongyu (recognised in China as a Living National Treasure). Studies at the Yale Language Institute, Chinese University, Hong Kong, China
1989 – 1999	Project at Conundrum Creek, at White River National Forest, Colorado, USA
2010 – 2013	<i>Clearing</i> project at Hillsdale, New York, USA
Since 2022	<i>Erechteion</i> project at "The Mount" (Edith Wharton's house), Lenox, Massachusetts, USA

Kathleen Jacobs lives and works in Great Barrington, Massachusetts.

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Kathleen Jacobs

SCORP

2021

Oil on linen

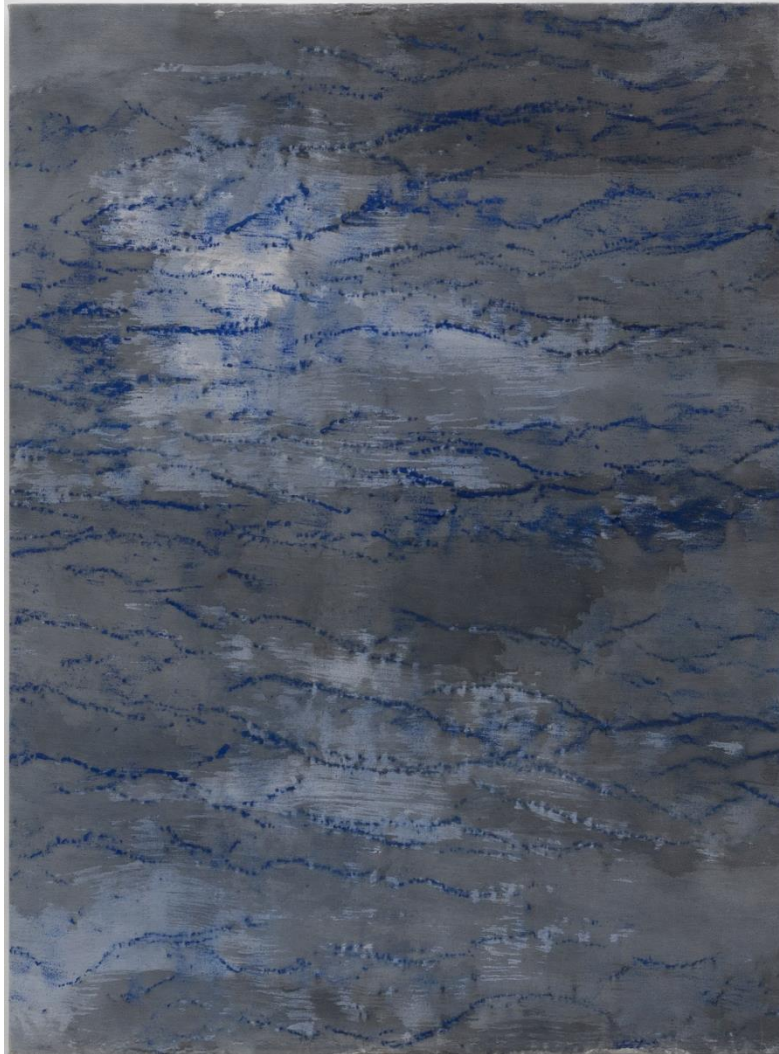
61 x 61 cm / 24 x 24 in

© **Kathleen Jacobs**

Photo : Lisa Vollmer

Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Cologne, Paris, St. Moritz

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Kathleen Jacobs

MOONS

2023

Oil on linen

155 x 114,3 cm / 61 x 45 in

© Kathleen Jacobs

Photo : Lisa Vollmer

Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Cologne, Paris, St. Moritz

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KATHLEEN JACOBS *LUMEN*

September 7th to October 21st 2023
Opening September 7th from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Galerie Karsten Greve is happy to host the American artist Kathleen Jacobs at its Parisian gallery for the first time. In this exhibition entitled *LUMEN*, the artist unveils works on paper and on canvas produced between 1990 and 2023.

Poetic and subtle, Kathleen Jacobs' work is rooted in her personal experience, forged between tradition and artistic encounters.

Her fascination with trees, first of all, began with *In Search of Times Past* (1959), a work by the Austrian Bauhaus photographer Herbert Bayer (1900-1985). The photograph, with its surrealist accents, representing a settlement of aspens superimposed with eyes, hung on the wall of her father's office, where it gradually permeated her subconscious and, later, her art.

Then came the decisive influence of her four-year trip to China, between 1984 and 1988, when she learned the art of calligraphy from her father-in-law, the Chinese artist Huang Yongyu (recognised in China as a Living National Treasure). In China, through that practice, Kathleen Jacobs learned the value of practising and learning, the Tao way ("Tao" meaning way or path). She also learned the meaning of space in painting, particularly through the landscapes of the Tang, Song and Ming dynasties, characterised by consecutive bare spaces and the absence of a horizon.

"The calligraphy practice helps me warm up before painting", she said. The watercolours and ink-on-paper works displayed in the exhibition are figurative works reflecting those oriental traditions, whether in the representation of landscapes and nature or in the mastery of lines and their movement. Calligraphy taught her to use her whole body to guide the paintbrush, in a perpetual awareness of its movement and her intention.

Her first works thus naturally represent landscapes, with trees as the main subjects. However, soon after her return to the United States, in 1989, Kathleen Jacobs realised that, in her desire to copy trees, her interpretation and expertise could never do her subject justice. She explained: *"I've spent many years outside painting and making woodcuts. After some time, I realized that I should use what was there (physically) to make the work... It was an interesting experience, collaborating with trees, weather, and time to paint these images. I allowed the surface to speak for itself"*. Huang taught her the importance of *"going to the source"*. In that way, the subject of her works became their base.

She then developed her novel rubbing technique, which enabled her to transfer the marks of tree bark onto the canvas, inspired by the woodblock-printing technique she had learned from the Japanese-American artist Hiroki Morinoue upon her return to the United States. The almost ritualistic creative process upon which her practice is based consists in rolling and stapling different-sized linen canvases vertically around meticulously-selected tree trunks or branches. Once affixed, the canvases are covered with a first layer of paint, generally white. Then the artist begins to rub a piece of canvas covered in pigments and oil paint (oil stick) over the surface of the canvas,

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from the bottom to the top, to capture the natural textures and contours of the bark.

The canvases stay in place for several months, and up to three years. They are naturally affected by the passage of time and the weather, in a uniquely Taoist process: “*act with no action; use the technique of no technique*”. Kathleen Jacobs often visits the trees to add an extra layer of paint at the right moment. It is a daily, weekly even monthly activity, each painting a meticulous construction born of many stages and a great deal of patience. As she meticulously applies the paint, layer upon layer, patterns emerge. Once separated from their plant base, the canvases are placed in the artist’s workshop. There, Kathleen Jacobs continues to apply watered-down oil and acrylic paint, either to the front or the back of the canvas, guiding the pigments through the weft. Her paintings are generally monochromatic, the artist limiting her palette to various hues of white, cold blue, yellow and red.

Finally, the artist rotates the canvases so the vertical motif of the lines of the trunk appears horizontal once the canvas is stretched over its frame.

For Kathleen Jacobs, that makes the architecture of the lines stand out, giving the work the appearance of a landscape and making the abstract visible. Looking at one of her works is like looking out a plane window at an aerial perspective where there are no landmarks and the horizons are numerous. Her ultimate goal is for her viewers to look inwards, to think and allow their imagination free rein, in an almost hypnotic symbiosis with the lines, colours and fabric. There is an ambiguity, accentuated by the square format of her works and the choice of their titles, deliberately abstract so as not to influence viewers’ interpretations. Formed by five capital letters, the titles are a direct reference to her experience as a pilot: they are aeronautical fixes used by aviators to find their way in the sky, but that have no particular meaning other than geographic, like a coordination point in the universe used to mark crossings in the sky.

Kathleen Jacobs has thus developed a unique, collaborative creative process with multiple players: time, nature, trees, their bark and, finally, the artist, with her methods, materials and tools. She emphasises the unifying stream that connects nature: “*for me, trees are a template for the law of nature (...) I realized that the lines and patterns of the bark were very similar to forms found in nature. Clouds in the sky, waves in the ocean, flowing rivers ...*”.

In this maelstrom of players, the marks resulting from the process are not a demonstration of the artist’s activity, but rather proof of it. Kathleen Jacobs thus anchors her works in the present, while simultaneously erasing any reference to reality, inviting the imagination to soar freely.

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Photos : Lisa Vollmer

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Kathleen Jacobs

KNITE (SKEYE)

2017

Oil on linen

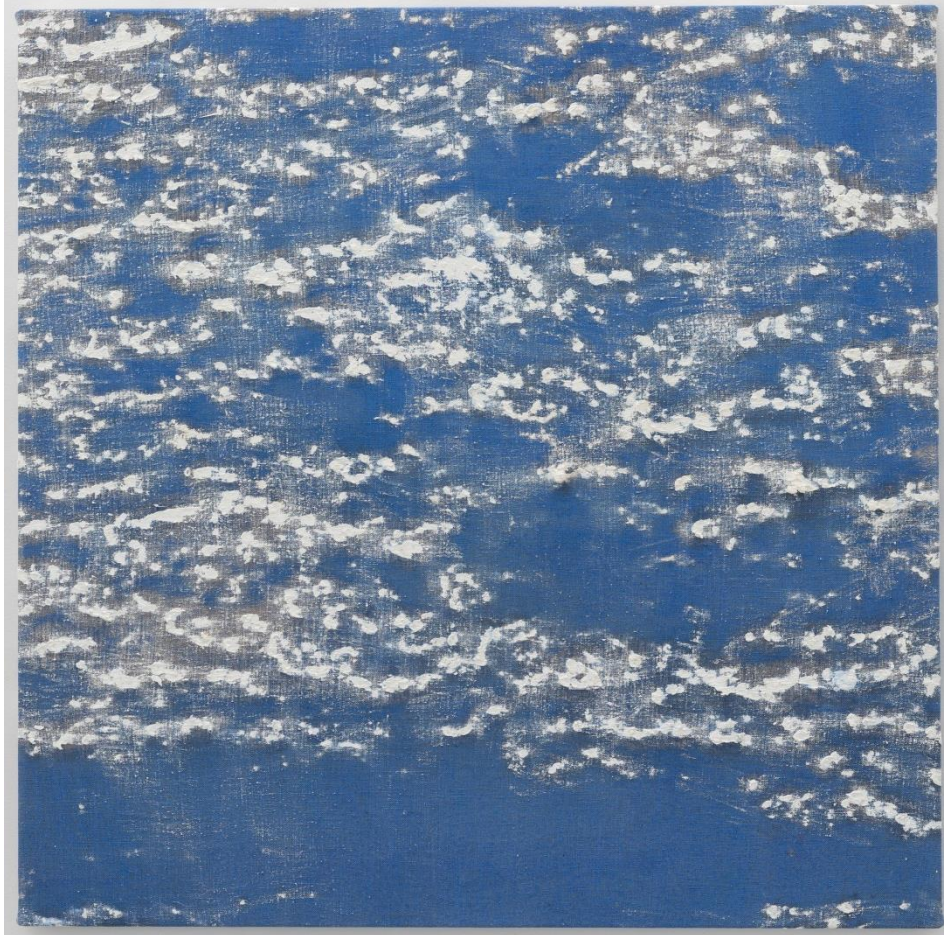
281.9 x 190.5 cm / 111 x 75 in

© Kathleen Jacobs

Photo : Lisa Vollmer

Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Cologne, Paris, St. Moritz

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Kathleen Jacobs

RIKOY

2021

Oil on linen

76.2 x 76.2 cm / 30 x 30 in

© **Kathleen Jacobs**

Photo : **Lisa Vollmer**

Courtesy **Galerie Karsten Greve Cologne, Paris, St. Moritz**

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Solo exhibitions (selection)

- 2023 *DRIFT*, Galerie Karsten Greve AG, St. Moritz, Switzerland
- 2022 *Kathleen Jacobs*, Fergus McCaffrey, Tokyo, Japan
CADAN, Yurakacho, Japan
- 2021 *SOARS*, Heather Gaudio Fine Art, New Canaan, CT, USA
- 2019 *Kathleen Jacobs*, ARS Gallery, Honolulu, HI, USA
ECHOS, *paintings and site-specific outdoor installation*, Turn Park Art Space,
West Stockbridge, MA, USA
AVION, The Bonnier Gallery, Miami, FL, USA
- 2018 *DRĒMS*, Fergus McCaffrey, New York, NY, USA
ARSCAFE Gallery, Honolulu, HI, USA
- 2017 *Kathleen Jacobs*, The Lab, Bellevue, WA, USA
- 2016 *Kathleen Jacobs: Clearing*, Hillman-Jackson Gallery, Great Barrington, MA,
USA
- 2015 *Gatherings*, Fergus McCaffrey Fine Art, New York, NY, USA

Group shows (selection)

- 2022 *Ninth Street and Beyond: 70 years of women in abstraction. Part I: The Gestural*,
Hunter Dunbar, New York, NY, USA
- 2019 *Inauguration: Carl Andre, Dan Flavin, Richard Höglund, Kathleen Jacobs, Yayoi
Kusama, Sol LeWitt, Joel Shapiro, and Frank Stella*, The Bonnier Gallery,
Miami, FL, USA
- 2019 *In Light of Shade*, Fergus McCaffrey, New York, NY, USA
- 2018 *Opening Reception: Carl Andre, Richard Höglund, Kathleen Jacobs, Sol Lewitt and
Christo*, The Bonnier Gallery, Miami, FL, USA
- 2018 *An Eccentric View: Tauba Auerbach, Jo Baer, Marsha Cottrell, Tara Donovan, Eva
Hesse, Kathleen Jacobs, Yayoi Kusama, Agnes Martin, Mira Schendel, Fernando
Mignoni*, New York, NY, USA
- 2019 *In Light of Shade*, Fergus McCaffrey, New York, NY, USA
- 2018 *Under The Night Sky*, organisé par Michael Black, Friedman Benda, New
York, NY, USA
- 2015 *Crunchy* (organisé par Clayton Press et Gregory Linn), Marianne Boesky
Gallery, New York, NY, USA
- 2014 *Love Story: The Anne and Wolfgang Titzze Collection*, Musée du Belvédère,
Vienne, Austria

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Kathleen Jacobs

LUMEN

2021

Oil on linen

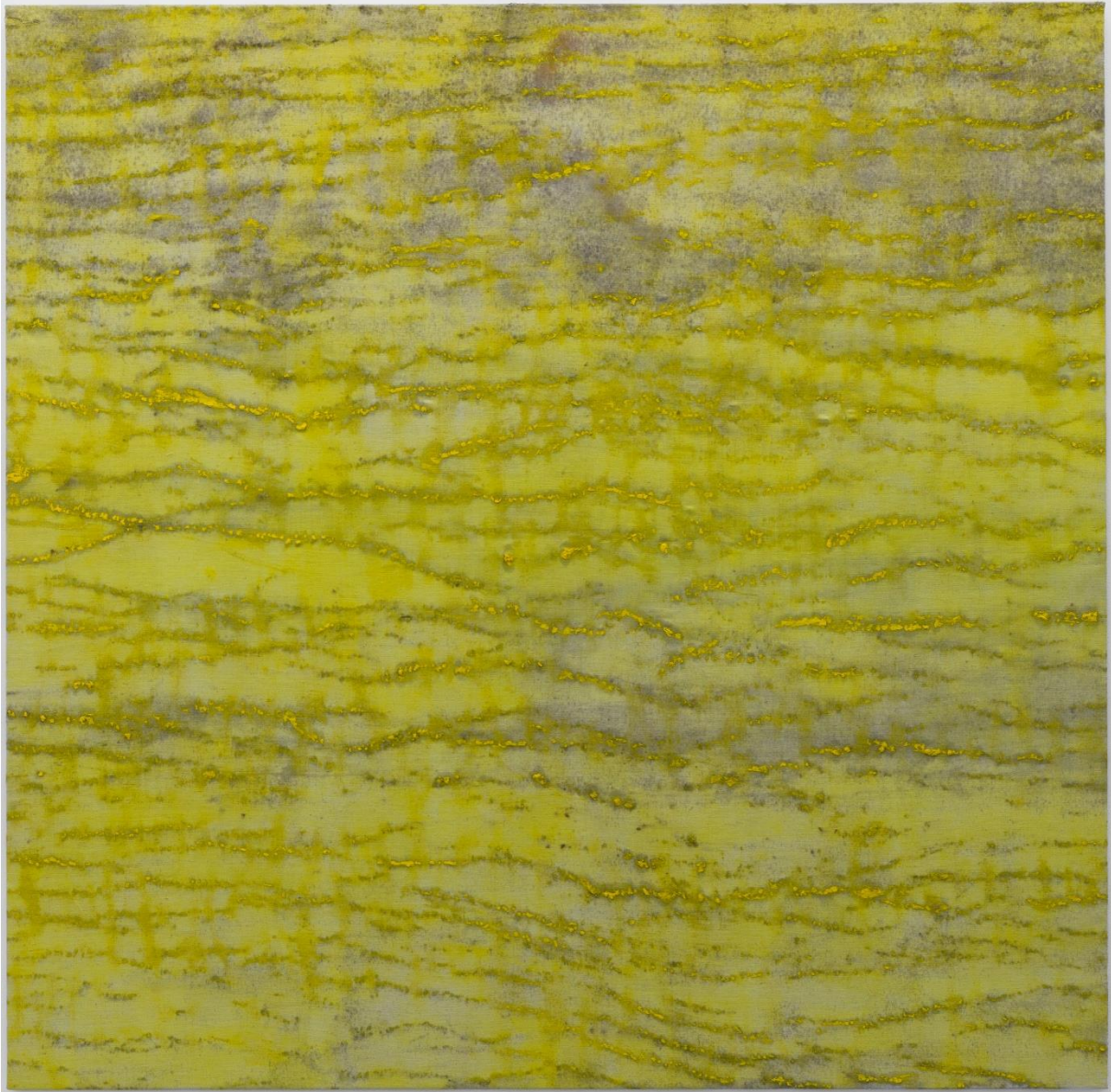
132.1 x 137.2 cm / 52 x 54 in

© Kathleen Jacobs

Photo : Lisa Vollmer

Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Cologne, Paris, St. Moritz

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Kathleen Jacobs

ENDVR

2023

Oil on linen

203 x 205 cm / 80 x 81 in

© Kathleen Jacobs

Photo : Lisa Vollmer

Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Cologne, Paris, St. Moritz

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SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2022

Kathleen Jacobs: SOARS

By Suzanne Julig

The sublime and transcendent paintings of Kathleen Jacobs are produced via a method involving the traditional materials of oil paint and linen canvas, yet are fully realized through collaboration with the natural environment and time. This is profoundly demonstrated in the exhibition Kathleen Jacobs: SOARS at Heather Gaudio Fine Art. Upon entering the gallery, the viewer is pulled into the energy and movement embodied by the interplay of line, surface, and color of the works collectively, as well as being drawn to the meditative quality of the individual paintings.

Early in Jacobs' career she spent four years living in Beijing and Hong Kong, where she studied and perfected Chinese calligraphy. This daily practice of mark making, and a relationship with Eastern philosophies, would ultimately influence and enrich the defining works seen here. Jacobs' artistic process, which she first explored while living in Aspen, CO, upon returning to the U.S., involves tightly wrapping and stapling thinly painted linen canvas vertically around a tree trunk. The artist then rubs the canvas with paint and oil stick multiple times over a period of months, and even years, creating a layered and textured surface. The resulting shapes, formed by the contours of the tree bark underneath, are transformed by the artist's ongoing application of pigment, and the weathering of the paint and canvas by the elements. When completed, each canvas is turned so the forms flow horizontally.

The painting titled SOARS, with its layers of white paint on a brilliant blue ground, is a notable example of Jacobs' technique and its stunning result. The myriad textures, varied thickness, and shifts in tone of the marks compel one to examine the work closely, while alternately stepping back to engage with the overall essence of the composition. The horizontal orientation of the forms generates a sensation of moving water, or scudding clouds, while remaining abstract. It is worth mentioning that the five-letter painting titles, and the name of the exhibition, are navigational fixes, or coordinates, used by pilots. These markers have significance for Jacobs, who, since moving to Massachusetts, has become an aerobatic pilot. A correlation between an aerial view and the elements of landscape reflected in these paintings seems unmistakable.

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Mardi – Samedi : 10h - 19h

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Samedi: 10h – 13h / 14h – 18h

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