

# GLADSTONE GALLERY

**Amy Sillman**

*Twice Removed*

515 West 24th Street

September 30 – November 14, 2020

Opening September 30, 10am – 6pm

[Make appointment to see the show here](#)

Gladstone Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new paintings and drawings by Amy Sillman at the Gallery's 24th Street location in Chelsea. The exhibition will also be available online for those who are unable to see the show in person.

Dear Reader,

The time we're living in is crazy, horrible, almost medieval with disease, increasing police brutality and militarization, diminishment of democratic rights, and the upcoming ledge of a terrifying election. I was supposed to have a show of drawings and paintings last May at Gladstone and titled it "Twice Removed": "*twice*" to propose the idea of a multiplied subjectivity, being of two minds, forked paths, and having allegiances to both subject and object, thinking and feeling, abstraction and figuration, form and content, dialectics and contradictions; "*removed*" because my paintings are built through negation, a kind of violent erasure, scraping down, undoing, getting rid of. But *twice removed* was also a pun on the family relation, being adjacent to something older. I'm a knight's move away from the old tradition of gestural painting, but I'm really not trying to kill the father: I love gestural painting like it was my grandma, even though I'm skeptical, pessimistic, and sometimes critical of what she stands for. (My mom always said I was too negative.) So I was also thinking about painting as an unrolling of time—both my own genealogy and the way I wanted to unfurl paintings and drawings in long horizontal sequences around the room. I wanted the work to be like scraps and fragments, a bunch of spare parts, puzzling things dug up archeologically, arranged around the rooms of the gallery in a frieze of tangled patches. I was already thinking bleak thoughts about America, and the work looked like it: melancholy, mostly only black and white, ambiguous, often either too raw or over-cooked, ambiguous. I was trying to make a new language out of a bunch of spare parts.

That show was postponed due to Covid19 and will now open in late September. But the new show is an even more shaggy, complicated affair, containing all of the above plus all the new work from this agonizing spring and summer shuffled in. For much of this time I didn't have a painting studio, so I just drew flowers, the opulent irises, day lilies, and sunflowers that were springing up around me from bushes and trees and from the earth. As Lorraine Hansberry asked (in her 1962 play), "what use are flowers?" I was obsessed with their colors and shapes, the simple joy of observing them, and how they exude libido, healing, and rebirth, even though while I was drawing them I was wondering if we might all die. Were they funerary or optimistic? During this spring, painting itself was overshadowed by the question of whether painting-life could continue to exist at all. But after months of the flowers, they started to morph into abstractions. The flower stems looked like the legs of figures stalking around, their heads bent over in a kind of looped narrative with no particular story except growth and then withering. The world's ground was shifting, so I started concentrating on the fields behind the figures— patterns, plaids, and confusing figure-to-grounds, a purposefully destabilized signal-to-noise ratio. And eventually it was the process of improvisation itself that seemed the most timely and urgent. I was thinking about a quote by Fred Moten, "improvisation is making nothing out of something." In this sense "nothing" is a good thing, it means you're in a hole, on the brink of change, and you have to listen, to pay attention. Improvising is a process that comes from within and that proposes a without, a nowhere that is everywhere. The hard questions continue (how to keep making paintings at all, if the world can possibly be rebuilt, and how) but I hope there's an alchemy in there, a use, in keeping on working with the motion between the known and an abstract (but felt) unknown.

Love,  
Amy

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Amy Sillman was born in 1955 in Detroit, Michigan, and currently lives and works in New York. Sillman's work has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions at institutions including: Arts Club of Chicago, Illinois; Camden Arts Centre, London; Albright Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York; Drawing Center, New York; Portikus, Frankfurt am Main, Germany; Kunsthaus Bregenz, Austria; and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C. Beginning at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston in 2014, Sillman's solo exhibition, "one lump or two," traveled to the Aspen Art Museum in Colorado and the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College, New York. Her works are held in the public collections of prominent institutions such as the Art Institute of Chicago; Brooklyn Museum, New York; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. For the Museum of Modern Art's reopening in fall 2019, Sillman curated the exhibition, "Artist's Choice: Amy Sillman—The Shape of Shape," on view through October 4, 2020.

Sillman's newest book, "Amy Sillman: Faux Pas," was released in Paris this summer and will be released in the United States by DAP, available on their website as well as through Gladstone's publications page. Published by After 8 Books and edited by Charlotte Houette, François Lancien-Guilberteau, and Benjamin Thorel, with a foreword by Lynne Tillman.

*Drawing 2020*  
530 West 21st Street  
September 24 – December

Kasper Bosmans  
130 East 64th Street  
September 17 – October 24

Richard Aldrich  
12 Rue du Grand Cerf  
September 3 – October 3

For further information, please contact Andrew Huff: [ahuff@gladstonegallery.com](mailto:ahuff@gladstonegallery.com)  
New York gallery hours: Tuesday–Saturday, 10am–6pm  
To make an appointment, please call +1 212 206 9300 or visit [gladstonegallery.com/contact](http://gladstonegallery.com/contact)