



Molly Metz, *Rest Here*, 2021, acrylic, ink, marker, newsprint on canvas, 54 1/4 x 54 inches, METZ I

## Molly Metz: Close Closer

June 11–August 13, 2021

Fleisher/Ollman is pleased to announce the opening of two solo exhibitions this summer: Molly Metz: Close Closer and *Bill Walton: Stack Fold Tool*. This is Metz's first exhibition at the gallery and we are delighted to announce her representation.

Molly Metz's (b. 1992, lives and works in Philadelphia) multivalent paintings weirdly teem with life. Her abstractions bring to mind the complexity of existence from the cellular to the astronomical, from the terrestrial to the aquatic, and the nooks and crannies in-between. In one interpretive take, we might think we are observing a primordial soup under a microscope in which the raw materials for life on earth congeal in effervescing suspensions. Amidst the animation are suspended cells in cross-section revealing their own micro-worlds of squiggly DNA—paintings within a painting. In another instance we might see something more solid, like sedimentary layers—geological rather than biological. Metz's earthy palette and her occasional pairing of DIY, backyard, pit-fired ceramics with particular paintings makes sense within this geological read. The interpretive wormhole of possibilities and binary contradictions (and yes, some of Metz's forms resemble worms) goes on and on: oceanic and outer space, internal and interstellar, solid and fluid. However, what might appear as gravitas is mixed with levity. Many of Metz's works feature words and short phrases—quotidian in nature—that bring humor into the picture. Tiny texts ("telling," "close closer," "no," "yes," "sounds about right") are often embedded within odd-shaped forms (cells, squiggles, gestures) with words occasionally so small that at first glance we might mistake them for thready bits of organic material. At other moments, words appear much larger, airbrushed across the surfaces of the paintings. Adding to the depth of field of her already richly painted surfaces (achieved through different brush sizes and painterly techniques as well as the atmospheric quality of misty airbrushing) are collage elements that interact with painted grounds. Drawing and washing with ink on newsprint, Metz creates what often appear as brush strokes or, in more elaborate instances, micro-paintings that are seamlessly adhered to the surface of the canvas. Several of Metz's paintings in the exhibition hold secret surprises—extemporaneous and process-oriented sketches in paint on the reverse of their supports.

Metz has a BA from Kutztown University (2014) and an MFA (painting) from Tyler School of Art (2016). She has had a solo exhibition at Day Space, Philadelphia and has been included in group exhibitions at Fjord, Pilot Projects, Woodmere Art Museum, and Space 1026 (all in Philadelphia) and YUI Gallery, New York.

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