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Erin McSavaney: *Interactions*

November 18th to December 16th, 2023

Reception for the artist: Saturday November 18th, 2 to 4pm

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Erin McSavaney's practice is concerned with spaces of everyday life and how, under close examination, our perception of these spaces can be altered through making and viewing paintings. This exhibition brings together pairs of paintings whose architectural subjects are complimentary in nature. Through the conception and installation of this body of work, McSavaney offers several points of entry to show how three-dimensional spaces and objects can be disrupted and rebuilt in paint.

McSavaney's process begins by photo documenting common commercial and residential buildings with their surrounding lawns, parking lots, gardens, fences, or driveways, all the typical adjacencies that are added to create uniqueness to these sites. The structures that attract the artist are ordinary, modern buildings that evoke memories of past events that could have occurred in these spaces: most emanate a mid-20th century aura. Once the basic shapes are selected, they literally form the building blocks of the painting, and what follows is an instinctive process of determining which passages from reality are essential, and which can deviate to form an entirely new composition. The artist explains: "By examining these places very closely, and then carefully transcribing the so-called 'real world' to the canvas, I am working through my emotional connection to shared spaces. This method of breaking things down and building them back up through a personal filter allows me to learn about, and better understand the world around me."

The geometric interventions in the works are imagined by the artist and take many forms. Sometimes, these squares, triangles, and other angular shapes index the mid-century era of the building, and at other times, they reinforce the angle of light and shadow. Still other applications echo, extend, or counter the existing architectural form. Through a long and labour-intensive process, reality and fiction are negotiated across the canvas, juxtaposing the detailed illusion of depth against the flatness of abstracted forms. The typical call-and-response process of abstract painting is utilized here to create pictorial harmony of a very realistic kind. The result is a new space that illuminates the relationship between representational and abstract painting, and the parallels of how they are constructed, where each action demands a reaction.

Erin McSavaney studied at Emily Carr University of Art + Design and graduated from Capilano University in 1998. He has exhibited his work across Canada and the United States, and is represented in both public and private collections, such as Global Affairs Canada (Ottawa) and TD Bank Group (Toronto). This is the artist's eighth solo exhibition with Equinox Gallery. Erin McSavaney lives and works in Courtenay, British Columbia, Canada.