

Holly Coulis

March 22 - April 19, 2025



Holly Coulis
Flowers, Water, Vases, 2025
Oil on linen
36 x 42 in
91.4 x 106.7 cm

Philip Martin Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition of new works by Georgia-based artist, Holly Coulis. Coulis haloes the still-life object with confident and electric lines of color in her work. By doing this, Coulis decontextualizes these objects, and gives viewers a new way to interact with the historic tradition of still life painting.

The creation of pictorial experience is at the heart of Holly Coulis's work. Coulis's paintings and works on paper investigate painterly space, often by way of color and gesture. Coulis builds abstraction using both her observations of everyday objects and the movement of her brush itself. Working from initial sketches, Holly Coulis first creates space through brushy lines and defined areas of applied paint, each outlined in color. She then further divides up areas and circumscribes forms. The result is abstracted composition intersecting with the odd still-life object – a lemon or an orange perhaps.

Holly Coulis's forms act as spatial agents in a picture plane, rather than as substitutes for bodies in physical space. Writing on Swiss master Paul Klee, Bridget Riley notes, "Every painter starts with elements - lines, colors, forms - that are essentially abstract in relation to the pictorial experience that can be created with them." Holly Coulis's forms jostle up against one another and dissolve, lending her compositions a feeling of movement and energy that includes both subject matter and a sense of abstraction. Color, rather than being the color of something specific, is contextualized by its surroundings. It defines space while also pushing that space both toward and away from us. The shapes in Coulis's work shift, fan, and stack, creating depth as well as unfamiliar moments.

Coulis comments, "I never intended to push them into abstraction, it just slowly started to happen. Now, in the next body of work, I am starting to become most interested in the abstract elements, how the lines intersect and weave and the places that open up for color. Sometimes I even want to eliminate all recognizable form! I'm not in any rush to do that, but there is part of me that wants to see what would happen if they became completely abstracted. You can sense that something else might happen," she says. "I create the language and then it feeds on itself. A number of possibilities open up a few directions (or not) and you have to just follow along. If you're a scientist, there's no end. There's no answer. You find an answer, and then you find another problem."

Holly COULIS (b. 1968, Toronto, Canada) received her BFA from Ontario College of Art and Design (Toronto, Canada) in 1995 and her MFA from School of the Museum of Fine Arts (Boston, MA) in 1998. Holly Coulis' recent and upcoming solo and group exhibitions include "Turn," and "Pocket Universe," Philip Martin Gallery (Los Angeles, CA); "Eyes and Yous," Klaus von Nichtssagend Gallery (New York, NY); "North by Northeast: Contemporary Canadian Painting," Kasmin Gallery (New York, NY); "Thailand Biennale," Pimamthip Art Gallery (Pak Chong District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province); "Evocations: Celebrating the Museum's Collection," Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art (Overland Park, KS); Simon Lee (London, UK); Cooper Cole (Toronto, Canada); University of Georgia (Athens, GA); Atlanta Contemporary (Atlanta, GA); Massachusetts College of Art and Design (Boston, MA); SARDINE Gallery (Brooklyn, NY); Paramó Gallery (Guadalajara, Mexico); El Museo de los Pintores Oaxaqueños (Oaxaca, Mexico); Galleria d'Art Moderna (Milan, Italy); The Bruce High Quality Foundation (New York, NY); and Leo Koenig (New York, NY). Coulis' work is included in the collections of the Blanton Museum of Art (Austin, TX); Fidelity Investments (Boston, MA); Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art (Overland Park, KS); OZ Art Northwest Arkansas (Bentonville, AR); Rollins College (Orlando, FL); and UT Southwestern Medical Center (Dallas, TX). Her work has been reviewed in publications such as Artforum, Art in America, Los Angeles Times, The New York Times, Flaunt Magazine, Hyperallergic, and FT Magazine. Coulis lives and works in Athens, GA.

Holly Coulis' exhibition of new works is on view March 22 - April 19, 2025, with an opening reception for the artist Saturday, March 22 from 5-8 PM.

Philip Martin Gallery is open Wednesday - Saturday from 11-5. For additional images, or information please email info@philipmartingallery.com, or call 323-507-2037. Philip Martin Gallery is located at 3342 Verdugo Road, Los Angeles, CA 90065 in the Glassell Park neighborhood of Los Angeles.

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