

OCTAVIA

ART GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Betsy Eby: Bellwether

April 7 – 28, 2018

Opening Reception: April 7, 6 – 8 pm

Octavia Art Gallery is pleased to present *Bellwether*, an exhibition of new abstract encaustic paintings by Betsy Eby. This body of work continues to draw from the rhythms and resonances in nature and music, while also capturing Eby's impressions of the cultural and physical climate today.

Betsy Eby's lyrically abstract paintings are created using an encaustic technique. This ancient process is one by which layers of pigment, sap and wax are molten when applied to the canvas and are then reheated by torch flame in order to fuse each layer together. It is a laborious and delicate process that Eby has refined over the years, generating a signature method and language through which she intuitively composes her lush and dynamic works. Her resultant canvases have a luminous organic surface coupled with a spatial density that is created, not just from layering her material, but also from the gestural and rhythmic application of pigment within each layer. While some forms and strokes appear saturated and well-defined, others are obscured, becoming opaque as they recede into deeper layers. The balance of these delicate and bold marks within the compositional structure evokes musical rhythms as well as the beauty and movement found in nature. A classically trained pianist, Eby seeks in her work what Rothko described as "the place where music lives." Each painting hovers between the material and immaterial and provides the viewer with a visceral and sensorial reaction.

In *Bellwether*, Eby departs from the delineated shapes found in earlier work to incorporate more luminous and fluid forms. The works emerge as meditations on maintaining reflection in our contemporary fever pitch. The agitated surfaces of these paintings reflect the temper of this current age of uncertainty and deep divisiveness in the world. Yet in the lyricism of her work, Eby seeks nuance, insight, contemplation, and the energy that connects all beings with nature.

Eby was recently selected by Art in Embassies at the US Department of State and US Embassy Port Moresby to conduct a cross cultural exchange program in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. This cultural outreach program aims to connect and collaborate with others artists, while enriching US public diplomacy abroad. For the program in Port Moresby, Eby focused on creativity and innovation to encourage artists to grow their artistic careers through workshops, master classes, best practices techniques and exercises in creative thinking.

Betsy Eby received her BA from the University of Oregon and splits her time between studios in Columbus, Georgia and Wheaton Island, Maine. Her work has been exhibited widely throughout the United States and is included in several collections including the Tacoma Art Museum, WA; the Columbus Museum, GA; the Georgia Museum of Art, Athens, GA and United States Embassy in Dubai.