

## AMY SILLMAN : ONE LUMP OR TWO

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Hessel Museum of Art

Painting is perhaps more vital today than any time since the heyday of the New York School in the late 1940s and 1950s, and Amy Sillman one of its most influential practitioners and thinkers. Through her dramatic shifts in style, sophisticated writings, and her role as head of the painting program at Bard College's prestigious MFA program, she has proven that the basic building blocks of 20th-century painting are as relevant as ever.

Amy Sillman: one lump or two—the artist's first museum survey—follows her development as an artist from the mid-1990s to the present, as her work moved from drawing to painting to moving images, and from figuration to abstraction. Featured are more than 90 works, including drawings, paintings, 'zines (which she calls "a chance to present one's own epiphanies"), and the artist's recent forays into animated film.

Sillman's early works, characterized by cartoon lines and a riot of pastel and acid hues, move effortlessly from figure to landscape, playfully and often humorously exploring problems of physical and emotional scale with observations that are both wry and revealing.

In the mid-2000s, Sillman took a different track as she started to draw couples from life in intimate pencil, ink, and gouache drawings that she then translated from memory into paintings with bold brushstrokes and abstract blocks of rich color. These paintings, with their angular forms and unexpected palettes, proved to be a reinvigorated form of 21st-century abstract expressionism.

As artists started to question painting's role in an age of reproduction and mass media, many looked to photography. Sillman turned instead to the diagram, injecting into her lush, abstract fields of color the sort of stringent line so often used to communicate complex information. Most recently, Sillman has questioned whether painting needs paint at all, making drawings on her iPhone that she transforms into movies that bring back the neurotic figures of her early images while delving further into the current roles of abstraction, color, and the diagram. This exhibition is curated by Helen Molesworth, *Barbara Lee Chief Curator*, ICA/Boston, who was recently appointed as chief curator at The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles beginning this fall.

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