



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
CONTACT KEVIN VAN GORP

GINA RUGGERI

NEW WORKS

JUNE 4 - JULY 30, 2016
OPENING JUNE 4, 6 - 9PM

Image Credit: *Squiggle Mesh*, 2015. Acrylic and ink on cloth, 56.25 x 44.25 in.

101/EXHIBIT is proud to present a new solo exhibition by gallery artist Gina Ruggeri. The opening with the artist will be held from 6-9pm on Saturday, June 4th. This is the artist's first solo showing with the gallery and her first in Los Angeles. The exhibition will run through July 30th at the 101/EXHIBIT West Hollywood space, located at 8920 Melrose Ave on the corner of North Almont Drive, one block south of Santa Monica Blvd.

Ruggeri's exhibition features over 20 new paintings from a body of work in development since 2012. That year, she stopped making her trademark illusionistic mylar cutout works of the 2000s, and began employing collage, working with diversely painted and stained fabrics. This transition has been remarkable and bold. It is not often that an artist will completely change her method of production for a clean slate. Although it might be challenging from a commercial aspect, this break in practice creates an oasis for the creative spirit, and refuses the need for certainty.

In 1817, the Romantic poet John Keats first used the term "negative capability". Negative capability is the deliberate willingness to embrace uncertainty, live with mystery, and make peace with ambiguity. As a challenge to the influential philosopher Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who was obsessed with philosophical truth and definitive answers, Keats argued that to master our creative spirit we must not reach after fact, reason, or set philosophies, and that the most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious.

101 / EXHIBIT

During the development of Ruggeri's new work, Keats' method proved invaluable. Negating her ego, Ruggeri nourished her creative process by never growing too fond of her ideas or too certain of her truths. She vigorously experimented with hundreds of different fabrics, stains, gestures, marks, arrangements, and patterns as her entire painting language began to change through improvisation. The result is a body of abstraction built from the ground up, from the molten lower layers of the subconscious that have welled up into the physical manifestations comprising this exhibition. Looking at Ruggeri's work one imagines Ad Reinhardt's "black" paintings of the 1960s with their skins ripped away, leaving the pooling sub-layers exposed and vulnerable. Ruggeri's abstractions are not vases into which we pour meaning. Instead they ask that we temporarily suspend what we know for as long as possible and simply experience what we see without trying to define it.

An inherent imagelessness is present as the hundreds of amoeba-like cut out samples of ink stains and brushstrokes coat the surfaces of the works, eliminating any perspectival vantage point for the viewer. We are as much inside of these paintings as we are in front of them. Our eyes grow disoriented by the endlessly complex arrangements. The components of the surfaces unify, distinctions are nullified, and definitions are evaded. In Ruggeri's paintings the pooling, dwelling, and reticulation of the pigments unite into beautiful primordial phenomena.

Ruggeri received her MFA in Painting and Printmaking from the Yale School of Art, and her BFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art. Her recent exhibitions include a solo show in 2010 at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield, Connecticut, and a 2011 solo show at Nancy Margolis Gallery in New York. Awards for her artwork include a grant from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, a NYFA grant, an Artist-in-Residence position at the Grand Canyon National Park, as well as fellowships at Yaddo, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Jentel, the Marie Walsh Sharpe Space Program, and the Lower East Side Printshop. Ruggeri teaches Drawing at Vassar College and SUNY-Purchase, and lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. The artist would like to thank the Emily Floyd Fund of Vassar College for its generous support of this exhibition.