

rachel uffner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Gianna Commito

January 11 – February 22, 2015

Opening Reception: Sunday, January 11, 6 – 8 pm

Rachel Uffner Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new paintings by Gianna Commito, the artist's second solo show with the gallery. This new group of paintings continues Commito's commitment to a rigorous formal structure of circuitous geometric stripes and planes, introducing shifts in palette and interlocking bands of varying girth and expanse, while alluding to architectural blueprints, modular buildings, and malleable external phenomena.

Taking inspiration from residential architecture, particularly 19th century farmhouses in Maine where the artist often resides, Commito's summative compositional arrangements follow a building-block type schema similar to the way these homes were built: interconnected and in stages. Starting with the most basic "little house" for a family connected to a "back house" for their animals, the simple structure is later bookended by a more substantial "big house" joined to the front and a larger barn built on to the back. It is a socio-economic ecosystem that indicates both the physical and financial expansion of a single family over time. Commito's paintings analogously start with a central axis, followed by horizontal and vertical lines either pushing out from the middle or compressing inward from the edge to create a source of internally and/or externally applied pressure. The concentric framing devices are painted first, then covered up while Commito adds the planer, fractured layers that eventually form the "body" of the painting. This kind of scaffolding of forms is apparent in compositions that become more chaotic as they move out towards the periphery, where multiple planes and stripes collapse on each other and formal strategies are concealed and revealed, establishing an uneasy union between accumulative color pairings and patterns.

The immersive, haptic quality of Commito's painting owes much to the physical and sensory demands of her process. Her meticulous, additive gestures relate to the weft and warp of textiles, with Commito illusionistically weaving several layers of imagery together. The materiality of the work – Commito's consistent use of casein on panels primed with marble dust-- further enhances their tactile and sensory qualities, building a surface that is softer, hazier, and dustier than the slick coat that initially meets the eye. The texture and rhythm play off of each other, as foreground and background inevitably meet and morph into one another, shifting in and out of focus. For Commito, abstraction alludes to the buildup of anomalous processes, practices, and experiences that seem familiar and resolved yet faintly estranged.

Gianna Commito has exhibited her work at The Drawing Center, NY; Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland, OH; Wallspace, New York; and Gavin Brown's enterprise, NY, among other venues. Commito has participated in artist residencies including the Cite Internationale des Arts in Paris, France, St. Michael's College in Colchester, Vermont, and Yaddo in Saratoga Springs, New York. She was awarded the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant in 2004. She lives and works in Ohio.

Image: Gianna Commito, *Swain*, 2014, casein and marble dust ground on panel, 30 x 24 inches, (76.2 x 61 cm)

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