



*Bougainvillea*, 2017  
Acrylic on 38 panels  
131 x 12 x 2 in.

## **lux**

Mel Prest

May 12 - June 16, 2018

Living and working in San Francisco for many years, artist and curator Mel Prest has become acutely attentive to the optical phenomena offered by the region's geography. The San Francisco Bay's persistent fog, for instance, provides shifts in light and color that transform one's sensorial experience of the city. An awareness for unique visual occurrences like these has greatly informed Prest's artistic practice and serves as the basis for her solo exhibition, *lux*, opening in May at Galleri Urbane.

Featuring all new work made in the last year, *lux* pays homage to two cities whose atmospheric, geographic, and architectural qualities offer vastly different sensational impressions. The blankets of fog and floral scents of coastal San Francisco are reflected in paintings like *Buttercup Aurora* (2017), where the artist's characteristic, hand-painted lines, applied in yellow and white, overlap in loose geometries to create a soft haze of subtle yellow. In contrast, the artist's travels to Mexico City, with its brightly colored

markets and buildings, come to mind in works like *Barragán 3* (2018) in which lines of green and grey intersect to activate a viewer's eyes with an oscillating energy. Composed of 38 solid-colored panels arranged to shift from pale pink to deep magenta to yellow amber, *Bougainvillea* (2017) references the vibrant hues found at the studio and home of Mexican architect Luis Barragán.

While many of the works reference these specific locales, Prest's paintings always explore visual phenomena that occur as a result of one's direct encounter with these objects. In some cases, Prest achieves this by enlisting the use of specifically engineered paint, like phosphorescent acrylics that glow in the dark or interference acrylics that shift hues when viewed at different angles, to provide the works with their own optical circumstances. Other works, like *Fuchsia Film* (2018), investigate an ocular event called "film color" in which a non-corporeal color appears like a mirage after extended viewing of the painting. Taking inspiration from chance instances that transpire in the natural world, Prest's paintings ultimately offer a unique ability to experience these rare moments time and time again.

A public opening reception for *lux* will take place at Galleri Urbane Dallas on Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018, from 6:30-8:30pm, and a conversation with the artist will take place beforehand at 6:00pm.

**Mel Prest** is a non-objective painter whose work is focused on color and perceptual visual relationships and synaesthetic response. She received her BFA in Painting from Rhode Island School of Design and MFA from Mills College in Oakland. Recent solo shows include: *Lilac Aura* at Chandra Cerrito Contemporary (2017); *In Praise of Planetary Time* at B Sakata Garo (2016) in Sacramento, *COLOR CHANT* at Chandra Cerrito Contemporary (2015), Oakland; *MoonBrightChime* at Galleri Urbane (2014), Dallas. Her works have been included in group shows at: Saturation Point ACME studios, London, UK; The Drawing Center, New York, NY; The Weatherspoon Museum of Art, Durham, NC; Zeitgeist gallery, Nashville, TN; IS Projects, Leiden, The Netherlands; Pentimenti Gallery, Philadelphia, PA. Prest has been awarded funded artist residencies at: Ragdale, The Sam and Adele Golden Artist Foundation, Willapa Bay AiR, The Wassaic Project and Vermont Studio Center, among others. As an independent curator, Prest has organized shows in Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Berlin, Munich and Zagreb. She is also a founding member of Transmitter, a collaborative curatorial gallery initiative in the Bushwick neighborhood of Brooklyn, NY.