

TIBOR DE NAGY

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Medrie MacPhee

Words Fail Me

January 30 to March 6, 2021



Medrie MacPhee *Take Me to the River* 2020
Oil and mixed media on canvas 96 x 120 inches

Tibor de Nagy is pleased to present *Words Fail Me* a one-person exhibition by Medrie MacPhee that opens on January 30 and runs until March 6. A fully illustrated catalogue will accompany the exhibition with a conversation between MacPhee and the artist Amy Sillman and an essay by the artist Nicole Eisenman.

This body of work represents a continuation of the significant shift for MacPhee who was known for her use of architecture and architectural forms to create narratives around the ideas of a dystopian future/past.

In recent years MacPhee began a fake fashion line (RELAX) for artist friends out of cheap discount clothing. Both “high” and “low” gear of mixed gender were cut up and reassembled into outfits with zippers, buttons, notions, other fabrics, and decorated hoodies. A kind of wearable sculpture where all of the things that might be considered in a painting such as opacity and transparency, shape and line, color and texture were considered. It was this act that eventually translated into the paintings.

Gradually what had been a “fashion” sideline - within a “gift economy” became translated into her paintings. The process begins in 99 cent store bins and bargain basements. In order to realize the potential of what has become a visual “matrix” or scaffolding - the loose grid of low-rise clothing on canvas suggesting shapes, moves, and colors that are then whitewashed over— she begins to paint, to improvise, to erase, to add until the painting fulfills the promise of the original set of conditions. It’s finally out of that matrix that the painting gradually arrives.

Color gives shape to forms recognizably human in origin where to borrow from Nadia Hebson's essay in *Material Matters* (Art and Theory Publishing, Stockholm) "the recondite relationship between clothing and agency can be atomized and gender becomes fluid." There is no tale to tell but meaning and matter are inextricably bound together in ways that conjure up all that can't be said.

Medrie MacPhee was born in Canada and moved to New York in 1976. MacPhee's numerous awards include American Academy of Arts and Letters Purchase Prizes (2015 & 2020), Pollock Krasner Award (2019), Anonymous Was a Woman award (2016), a Guggenheim Fellowship in Fine Arts (2009), New York Foundation For The Arts (1998), and a Canada Council Established Artist Grant (2004). Her work is in various public collections including the Metropolitan Museum, The National Gallery of Canada, the Palmer Museum of Art at Penn State, The Art Gallery of Ontario, and the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. MacPhee is the Sherry Burt Hennessey artist-in-residence at Bard College.