

Soundbites

by Caroline Mousseau

In collaboration with the exhibition
Sounding It Out by Larissa Tiggelers
Norberg Hall, Mohkínstsis (Calgary)
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The other evening, I went for a walk and heard something I hadn't in quite some time: muffled voices and clinking utensils through the crack of an open window. I never found the exact source but stood in pause momentarily, imagining what could be.

I continued, and Larissa Tiggelers' paintings came to mind while the sound of conversations dissipated into the darkening vignette of night. Working with colour is genuinely reminiscent of negotiating an idea with an other—Tiggelers' paintings do just that, eliciting a stretched process of interaction that can only be perceived in snippets. It is as if they are portals, showing us the possibilities of intimate relationships within a space. They sit in-between moments, compressing time—perhaps inviting Joseph Albers and Marina Adams to co-host a dinner party. Dear Agnes also popped in earlier to say hello, but she couldn't stay for long.

The sun sets deep cadmium yellows framed in pinks tinted with warm naphthol scarlet—casting icy shadows of blue, mauve, and grey inside. This moment has a shape; angular, elongated peaks grow with an imperfect doubling that does not quite mirror movements from the other, but clearly, they link. Across the room, two others turn eagerly to opposite sides, touching back-to-back as complimentary chatter expands into their shared space. Gone is the previous shyness of the group as individuals speak with and catch glimpses of each other as they lock eyes over the center before peeking elsewhere. Soundbites jut out into the corners, stretching the conversation's reach. From outside the window, I just want to get closer to that warm hum of excitement.

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In his book, *The Observer Effect*, Barry Schwabsky writes of painter Maureen Gallace's ordinary, featureless houses in relation to Albers' perpetual framing squares, noting both as "a given shape, a certain geometry"¹ which is, or seems, hermetically sealed. However, for Schwabsky, Gallace's little houses are boundlessly puzzling despite the upfront quality of the paint and image; it is as if they "stand to remind us that something remains hidden, inaccessible. [...] as if the shack was nothing more than a framing device for a view of what's beyond it."² In a surprisingly similar way, Tiggelers' paintings use geometric abstraction not to indicate a fully determined surface, as they appear to be, but as humble frames for the idea that conversations and thoughts unfold beyond the ones perceived inside a particular painting at any given time. Their window-like statures hint at expansive possibilities radiating from points of reference, doubling, even multiplying questions into cockeyed tangents that lead us into views beyond—frames within a frame within other frames of colour. Tiggelers may center on a direct, intimate relationship with her material and its perception—carefully finding hues from or amongst another—but certain moments of that process remain enigmatic, ambiguous from the outside looking in. And yet there is always something unattainable in sharing, which piques curiosity and invites us into points of connection. One can never truly know what another thinks. Instead, Tiggelers asks us gently to put our trust in the glimpse.

This or that?
This from that?
How does this sound to you?

Caroline Mousseau is an artist based in Winnipeg, located on Treaty One Territory. Mousseau has exhibited throughout North America, with presentations at the Art Gallery of Guelph, the Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Birch Contemporary, Art Toronto (Canada), CYDONIA (USA) and Zona Maco (Mexico) among others. She was the recipient of the prestigious Joseph Plaskett Award in Painting (2019) and several other awards including a Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship (2019). In 2014, Mousseau was curated in the Thames & Hudson publication *100 Painters of Tomorrow* with its accompanying exhibition in New York and book launch in London, UK. Mousseau holds an MFA from the University of Guelph (2020) and a BFA from Emily Carr University of Art + Design (2012). Mousseau's works are found in private collections throughout Canada, the United States, and South America.

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1 Schwabsky, Barry. "Framing the View: Maureen Gallace and the Unknowable." *The Observer Effect: On Contemporary Painting*. Edited by Rob Colvin and Sherman Sam. Sternberg Press, Berlin, 2019, p. 134.
2 Ibid, p. 139.