Claire Seidl

If It's Not One Thing It's Another

Paintings and Photographs
December 23, 2021–March 30, 2020
Curated by Fran Kaufman

It's rare for an artist to have a dual practice in painting and photography, where each medium is pursued with equal intensity. Claire Seidl is fluent with the tools of both; there is a consistency to her idiosyncratic language whether she is wielding a paintbrush, or turning her Hasselblad camera towards details of the everyday world. Splitting her time between her home in lower Manhattan and her lakefront cabin in northern Maine, she looks closely at two very different environments, creating most of her photographs when she is in Maine, and continuing her decades-long practice on canvas and mylar whether working in her urban or country studios.

Known as a colorist, her paintings explore formal concerns, drawing the viewer into the abstract realms she creates. Using different brushes, spatulas or knives to apply layers of translucent or deeply saturated paint, her palette of mainly blues, greens, yellows and pinks is loosely inspired by the natural world. Emerging from a modernist tradition, Claire's painterly language is highly nuanced. The sense of drawing is ever-present; we are aware of her hand making mark after mark, each gesture a dynamic reaction to what has gone before whether buried beneath layers of paint or sitting like calligraphy on the surface. Claire looks closely at the world around her, and that observation is a key part of her work. She is interested in perception, in how we see what is right in front of us.

In her photos, mostly taken at night in Maine, you see the light drenching, reflecting on or softly illuminating a simple object like a chair or a bit of cloth. In the deep rural darkness, we may see moonlight through a scrim of trees, dancing on blades of tall grass or illuminating a lone swimmer. It is a mysterious everyday world filtered through a painterly eye, a world of discrete moments, elongated, abstracted and held within the camera lens until some intuitive resolution between reality and memory is achieved. Unlike her paintings, her photographs are black and white, printed carefully in her darkroom, not manipulated or digitized. Their titles are literal, named for what is in front of her camera—*Chair, Robe, Moonlight* for example—different from the poetics used to name her paintings, yet no less poetic in their effect.

It is clear that there is an intimate conversation between her paintings, work on paper and photographs. They explore the same formal concerns, even while adapting to the demands specific to each medium. Claire's work is authentic and challenging, rewarding contemplation of a world born of careful looking and fearless expression.

Claire Seidl lives and works in New York City and Rangeley, Maine. She received her BFA from Syracuse University and her MFA from Hunter College in NYC. She later studied photography at the International Center for Photography. Seidl has had more than 40 solo shows, and has participated in over 100 group shows nationally and internationally. Museum venues include the Aldrich Museum, CT; Columbus Museum, OH; McNay Art Museum, TX; Moscow Museum of Modern Art; Russian Museum of Photography; and the Portland Museum of Art, ME. Seidl will have a solo show of new work at David Richard Gallery, NYC in April 2022 and a retrospective at the Maine Museum of Photographic Arts in 2022-2023. A book with an essay by Karen Wilkin will accompany the exhibition. She is a member of American Abstract Artists and chair of its Exhibition Committee.

Fran Kaufman
NYC, December 2021

Please contact Fran Kaufman at fran@kv-projects.com to schedule an appointment and for additional information.

Artworks

It's Always Something
2019, oil on linen, 48 x 38 inches

Clothesline, Rolsebush
2016, silver gelatin, selenium-toned photograph, 14½ x 14¾ inches
image size, edition of 4

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Presented by 1GAP Gallery
One Grand Army Plaza
Brooklyn, New York 11238