



Near and DISTANT VIEWS

Paintings by Elisabeth Condon 康丽冰

November 2018 – January 31, 2019
Central Gallery, Concourse E, just past security

For more information, please contact 305.876.0749
or visit www.miami-airport.com



Cover image: *Wallpaper Dragon*, 2017, ink, acrylic and watercolor on paper, 51 x 369 inches
Courtesy Emerson Dorsch Gallery, Miami, FL.

Miami International Airport is proud to present Elisabeth Condon's exhibition *Near and Distant Views*. Elisabeth Condon is an amazing travel writer, only her mode of communication happens to be mostly painting. *Near and Distant Views* is a selection of paintings made over the last eight years, culled from the artist's sketchbooks of her travels to residencies all over the world. These paintings present an intoxicating (and dizzying) mixture of post-war North American Abstraction, travelogues and Chinese literati painting.



Love, American Style, 2016, acrylic and glitter on linen, 54 x 72 inches
Courtesy Emerson Dorsch Gallery, Miami, FL

TO KNOW ELISABETH CONDON is to understand the magnitude of the art that she holds in her head. I write *head* wishing that English had an equivalent of 心, the amalgam of heart, spirit, mind, cognition, learning, and experience that the Chinese pronounce xin.

The paintings on view in her exhibition at Miami International Airport are the product of eight years of studio labor. Included in that time is a residency schedule that would crush a lesser artist. She painted from Loleta, California to Saratoga Springs, New York, and from Sheridan, Wyoming to the Florida Everglades. There were forays to Cadaqués and Shanghai as well. All the while she took in visual experience like a whale takes in plankton from the ocean.

This has always been her way. As the rebellious teenage daughter of a conservative Angeleno family, she wallowed in chemically-enhanced fascination with the wallpaper with which her mother bedecked the house. The making of pattern and the making of meaning thus became permanently linked in her psyche. Those impulses are filtered through a sensitivity to material that we associate with high modernism – an enjoyment of paint as paint. That is to say, a completely contradictory impulse that does not readily support either pattern or image, and certainly doesn't support them both at the same time.

This has all the makings of a kind of internal religious war. Indeed, Condon spent years alternating between straightforward abstraction and painterly figuration before acting on a hunch that a resolution lay within the Asian tradition. Travels to Beijing and Taichung in the mid-2000s allowed her to explore a mode of making that was familiar enough to offer a way in, but distant enough to initiate a creative reset. Figurative elements of Chinese art come out of a practice of copying, not unlike the method by which one makes patterns. Abstract elements of Chinese art, its concern with effective use of empty space, its regard of the density and handling of ink as a topic of contemplation in itself, closely track with the challenges of mid-20th century American abstraction.



Electric Lotus Land, 2014, mixed media on canvas, 79 x 98 inches
Courtesy Emerson Dorsch Gallery, Miami, FL

This last item brings us to a point of great import in Condon's work, the pour. It may sound strange to claim that some people pour paint better than others, but it is the case that Condon owns the pour these days and everyone else is borrowing it. Pours are structural necessities in her work. They provide the primal soup from which her pictures emerge. Condon's pours are at the intersection of crossed axes, one between image and shape, the other between pattern and gesture, offering the potential in subsequent



Mid-Autumn Festival, 2014, acrylic on linen, 39 x 39 inches
Courtesy Lesley Heller Gallery, New York, NY

layers to transform into any of them. This structure can support an enormous amount of input, which is how she keeps changing her physical location, laying her eyes on new source material, absorbing it, and putting it into her work.

This exhibition contains four examples of her work on canvas, giving viewers a sense of the aplomb with which she handles a typical painting. But *Wallpaper Dragon* from 2018, at thirty feet wide, dominates the room. Luscious splashes of fluid paint form a spine upon which hang plant forms, abstract and figurative decorations, spatters and brushed lines. It seems to hail from every part of the world, and from every corner of the artist's being. Condon would never make such a boast, but one recalls a claim by the Qing painter Shitao: "I have been taught by Heaven itself; how could I return to the Ancients without transforming them?"

Franklin Einspruch



Gaoxing, Beijing, 2009, acrylic on canvas, 79 x 117.5 inches
Courtesy Artist Pension Trust

ELISABETH CONDON is an American artist known for her multilayered poured paintings. A Los Angeles native, she currently lives and works in New York, NY. Condon is recipient of the 2015 New York PULSE Prize, a 2015 New York Studio School Mercedes Matter award, a Pollock Krasner Foundation Grant and a Florida Individual Artist Grant.

An enthusiastic traveler, Condon's recent artist residencies and fellowships include the Montello, UCross, and Morris Graves Foundations; Carrizozo Colony; Wave Hill Winter Workspace Program; Art + History Museums Maitland; Swatch Art Peace Hotel Shanghai; National Parks residencies in the Florida Everglades (AIRIE), Grand Canyon National Park and Wupatki National Monument; Yaddo, The Fountainhead Residency, as well as residencies in Beijing, Taichung and Somerset, UK.

Condon's work is in the collections of the Perez Art Museum Miami, Tampa Museum of Art, St. Petersburg Fine Art Museum, the United States Foundation of Art in Embassies Program Beijing and JP Morgan Chase. Her paintings have been featured in numerous online and print publications including *Hyperallergic*, *artcritical*, *Artnews*, *Arts + Antiques*, *New York Observer* and *Miami Herald*. She is represented by Emerson Dorsch Gallery in Miami, FL, and by Lesley Heller Gallery in New York, NY.

"These paintings are informed by travel, made in different but related times and places: Beijing (2009), Shanghai (2014), New Mexico and Florida (2018). In painting, I compress imagery, pattern and pours into thin layers of paint that unfold over time, like a scroll."

– Elisabeth Condon