

ALMINE RECH

Andrea Marie Breiling Fence, Fall, Touch: 10 new paintings by Andrea Marie Breiling

Jun 24 — Jul 24, 2022 | Gallery Weekend Beijing

Almine Rech is pleased to present a special project during Gallery Weekend Beijing 2022 - 'Fence, Fall, Touch: 10 new paintings by Andrea Marie Breiling'. This is Andrea Marie Breiling's first exhibition in China and her third solo exhibition with Almine Rech. The exhibition runs from June 25 until July 24, 2022.

Empty Floor

by Jan Blomqvist Floor

Emma wants the secret to be told
That the fucking rainbow has no gold
And she knows exactly what to say
Confusing it completely the next day
And we just wanna feel something we're not
And forget about the limits that we got
Like you're losing your senses
Abusing them too much
Another try to break the fences
Seem to fall with just a touch
The unsaid always talks to you at night
And you don't even know you, get it right
And the days are passing by, as they do
So Emma wants to stop the time with you
Like you're losing your senses
Abusing them too much
Your never-ending dance is
Endlessly untouched
The illusion of chances
Confusing you too much
Another try to break the fences
Seem to fall with just a touch
Emma knows exactly how you feel
But you can't even ask if this is real
Recorded voice cracks in, "please hold the line"
Was the floor this empty all the time?

As physical as they come, and known for her explosive and highly energetic paintings, American contemporary abstract painter Andrea Marie Breiling has come into her own by focusing solely on what are now known as her "Spray Paint Paintings."

By mimicking the use of a traditional brush, Breiling's spray paintings appear deeply layered and chaotic, while exuding an ethereal mood. These new atmospheric works have an otherworldly, even futuristic, aura to them, and stand alone as truly unique relative to any other spray paint paintings made to-date. You would be forgiven, though certainly not alone, if, at first glance, you were unaware that these works were made without the use of a paintbrush.

Having worked with spray paint exclusively for the last 3 years, Breiling is nowhere near the end of her evolution with this form of painting, despite her reputation for constantly discovering and reimagining new techniques. In her own words, "I am so obsessed with working this way. I feel like I've only just tapped into the potential of what this sole medium has to offer. I really feel like the sheer depth of working this way has so much more to offer me, especially when dealing with the complicated historical world of abstraction."

Her willingness and ability to push the limits of this spray paint technique are as evident as they are exciting. As seen here in this new exhibition Fence, Fall, Touch, each of the ten new works somehow manages to blend confidence with vulnerability, experimentation with mastery, and raw chaos with a delicate, sweeping beauty. But in contrast with her past exhibitions, there seems to be continuity - more so than ever before. Not only does each of her new works demonstrate a step-change in her evolution as an artist, but it is clear that she has applied specific and consistent techniques that tie the body of work together as a whole. Yet again, it is clear that she has pushed open a new boundary.

When I share this observation to her, she goes on to say "when I knew I was going to be having a solo exhibition for the first time in China, I had an immediate urge to paint all the canvases completely yellow before I started in with other colors, which was something I had never done before - hence the continuity you are observing. To me, a yellow foundation seemed very fitting in the spirit of prosperity and good luck that Chinese culture has always represented to me. So with that decision, the body of work instantaneously felt unique and more cohesive than anything else I had ever done. I used the yellow to help guide the color choices, to reinforce the intensity of the composition, and to drive rhythm of the entire show. Yellow is a very powerful color symbolizing optimism, joy, and, friendship, so I had a very inspired task at hand!" And, when asked to shed light on the evolution of her mark-making and spray paint style, she told me, "I wanted the work to feel more visceral and alive in spirit - really paying homage to the Chinese culture and people. I felt inspired to 'wake up' yet again, so I challenged myself to use a wider variety of tips so I could layer colors in deeper and more intensely; striving for a more powerful and complicated picture. I wanted to create a show that was full of light, movement, and hope - each painting needed its own strong voice."

As exemplified by her work titled Emma, (the name derived from the song Empty Floor, by James Blomquists - lyrics shown above) this inspired energy emanates from within the picture itself and bursts right off of the canvas into the ether, far more explosive than ever before. Breiling almost always listens to music when in the studio, and the choreography of her movements is crucial to creating each complex picture. She quotes Blomquist's lyric 'Emma want to stop the time with you,' and tells me that the song helped shape her desire to connect with, and deliver something special for, the Chinese people through her new work.

"Complexity is usually my primary goal," she says, "Beauty is almost always my least valued objective." With her music blasting, she sifts through her huge array of spray can tips which allow her to create her signature ethereal layering effects, she explains, "...sometimes I will deliberately choose a palette ahead time, however, more often than not, I just go for it and let improvisation take the driver's seat."

For Breiling though, speed is of the essence - she relies on her explosive energy from start to finish, as she is constantly swapping out tips and colors to ensure that each painting radiates with complexities interesting and powerful enough to keep her attention captured. After all, the paintings give her energy, not vice versa: "They are in charge," she says.

Her studio is perched like a treehouse in the lush woods of Connecticut just outside of Manhattan, surrounded by trees and nature. In it, Breiling is forced to deal with an immense natural beauty far more powerful and complex than any canvas might be.

“When I step into the studio, I am immediately flooded with inspiration and almost always a sudden rush of urgency to get to work; an overwhelming desire to get my energy right onto the canvas.”

Compared with Breiling’s past presentations, and perhaps a testament to her growing confidence and mastery of the style, these new works do just this - they pack a punch; or like she likes to say, “stop time”. Which given the sheer energetic beauty that radiates from them I am almost forced to stop- look closer and engage; letting go for a moment of my own reality. I find myself imagining her in her forest studio making the work. Each mark made on the canvas is quicker, more frenetic, and far more furious than ever before. If prior presentations bordered at times on being decorative in nature, her new effort completely destroys any notion of art-as-decoration...each piece seems to be its own vibrant kaleidoscope of deliberate marks which effortlessly intertwine and threaten to fly away. These works seem to be the output of a vigorous, impassioned, and highly physical artist who has aspired to make demanding, all-encompassing paintings on par with some of the great abstract expressionistic painters throughout history.

And, Emma (the painting) really does stop time - even if only for a second - and makes you grapple with the sheer beauty of it all made from cans of spray paint.

- Liam McCarthy

Graduate of Harvard University, 2002

Degree in Psychology