

ter that catch Agematsu's
ooking at to begin with. Most
ond recognition. We might
me fragility, but we have to
in the street, would we even
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t of asphalt or cement or city
t of candy sucker, or a pastel
am, or a snippet of a wrapper
escent color. Wouldn't it all get
ar field of vision at the level of
e same, there is fugitive beauty
details—a little tangle of hair,
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owever incidental our looking
ve register the passage of time
Agematsu's durational focus

literalness of the gleanings,
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s a sustained plunge into the
e manufactured universe, and
ell dirty truths about commodity
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ying that Agematsu's miniature
ad as contemporary vanitas,
em to be a primary agenda. In
h Phong Bui, published in the
the *Brooklyn Rail*, Agematsu
looking for anything." Rather,
nciously unconscious." In this
ensitivity, he sees and responds
o small, so ephemeral, as to be

tsu worked in the art world—as
hn Weber Gallery, as the super
ation building, as an assistant
n those jobs he was inside the
ble as an artist. Invisibility was
nd, paradoxically, it also became
k. Agematsu's walks constitute
y activity, one that goes largely
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to become invisible. Becoming
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oned interview with Phong Bui,
," "When I see the object I don't
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e collects target him first. They
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ject, then, is an index or marker
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ng fully present. Each walk, each
to him, renews the possibility of
ness. However we might process
ndisputably, what we're given is
m. ☞

and historian who lives and works in NYC



Diana Copperwhite, *Chemical Allegro*, 2019. Oil on canvas, 94 x 70 inches. Courtesy 532 Gallery Thomas Jaeckel, New York.

DIANA COPPERWHITE: THE CLOCK STRUCK BETWEEN TIME

532 GALLERY THOMAS JAECKEL
APRIL 30 – JUNE 1, 2019

BY ROBERT R. SHANE

The question one asks while experiencing Diana Copperwhite's new paintings is: When are they happening? As the exhibition title, *The Clock Struck Between Time* suggests, the artwork places us in an ambiguous temporal space, drifting from the present moment into a memory still struggling to take form. In these abstract canvases that at times suggest interior spaces, empty or populated, the Dublin-based artist squeegees, smears, and scrapes her medium. Copperwhite's process and form evoke both a sense of excavation—and with it, Freud's archaeological metaphors for delving into the past and the unconscious—and that sense of blurring or erasure when one cannot quite fully remember an event. Her fluid bands of colored light slicing across weathered surfaces viscerally affect the viewer, reminding us that memory is not just an artifact of the past, but an animated phenomenon intensely felt in the present.

The unstable spaces in Copperwhite's paintings reinforce their temporal ambiguity. Derived from an amalgam of her own and found images, which include both people familiar to her and strangers, the dissolving planes in these paintings at times sit flat and other times rapidly recede. In the towering canvas *Chemical Allegro* (2019) the viewer struggles to find purchase in such an ever-shifting space, while simultaneously encountering hallucinatory life-sized figures; luminous purple, blue, green, and orange stripes lithely traveling together at the speed of light suggest heads or auras.

Our ubiquitous cyber world provides the foil for Copperwhite's exploration of memory in these paintings, which she describes as a "digital stream of information that becomes poetic." Social media apps and smartphones now do the work of memory for us. Unprompted at seemingly random moments, an iPhone tells its user, "You have a new memory," as it presents a photograph from storage that its algorithms selected for the user to remember. In

contrast, Copperwhite's additive and subtractive process, continually under construction and under erasure, is analogous to the interminable psychological work of human memory. Set in an environment of stacked, color band squares, the ghostly figure in *A Semi Solid Emotion* (2019) embodies the fate of traditional memory in our digital age as it desperately clings to the remnants of a recognizable form amidst scumbling, scratching, and fine tributaries left by pathways of solvent.

Aspects of Copperwhite's work might recall Gerhard Richter's monumental squeegee paintings; however, Richter's work was purposefully superficial, a mechanically produced parody of Abstract Expressionism, whereas Copperwhite's inventive uses of the squeegee, palette knife, and brush are never mechanical even when informed by the digital landscape. Her mark-making, guided by instinct rather than a predetermined technique, is closer to German Expressionism. (The artist cites Joan Mitchell's autonomous mark-making as an important influence, and de Kooning's painterly gesture is present too.) At the same time, however, German Expressionists and Abstract Expressionists worked toward humanist, modernist notions of the self, whereas Copperwhite paints vanishing traces of figures and investigates gaps in memory that reveal the temporal discontinuity and, ultimately, incohesion of the self. In *Trace Element* (2019) the figures have all but disintegrated and been replaced by inhuman blocks of vertical, luminous, multi-colored bands dominating the scene.

In two smaller (24 by 20 inch) iconic works, Copperwhite evokes slow-tempo, intimate memories, which offer an escape from the frenzied digital ecstasy of large-scale works like *Chemical Allegro*. In the nocturnal *Hug* (2019) two muted rainbow forms extend and tenderly curl around each other amidst a heavy, palette-knifed black background. The solitary head composed of pulsating, concentric halos in *Dreamer* (2019) blurs and ripples. Loops drawn in the foreground read as cursive script, but a dripping rectangle acts as a bar of repression erasing the writing's content at the waking moment. The title invites mediation upon the temporal incongruities of dreaming in which people and elements from the past conflate with those from the present.

The Clock Struck Between Time is Copperwhite's third solo show at 532 Gallery Thomas Jaeckel, and the radical disintegration of her figures—to such a degree that we are uncertain if we see remnants of human bodies or if our eyes have simply anthropomorphized pure abstract forms—marks a subtle but significant break with her previous exhibitions. As with contemporary philosopher Fanny Söderbäck's dialectical notion of "revolutionary time," Copperwhite is both retrospective, returning again and again to her own motifs and select art historical styles, while simultaneously advancing them both towards an undetermined stylistic future. The drama between reality and virtual reality over the years in her work has reached a point where her paintings now tell stories of a world in which the virtual is on the verge of domination, as in her haunting *Dark Cloud Silver Lining* (2019) chillingly devoid of figures, a virtual memory of a posthuman future. ☞

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Installation view: Liz Mago, University of Chicago, P

LIZ MAGO BLOWOUT

THE RENAISSANCE
THE UNIVERSITY
APRIL 27 – JUN

BY JARED QUINN

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