

CONTAINMENTS

Paintings by Joanne Kaufman

On View: May 25-July 15, 2018

Reception: Friday, June 1 from 6 to 8 pm

Location: Washington Studio School, 2129 S Street, NW

Contact: Jill Phillips, Artistic Director and Head of Faculty 202.234.3030



Washington Studio School (WSS) is pleased to present *Containments*, an exhibition of 11 large-scale paintings by Washington-area painter and WSS Certificate Program graduate, Joanne Kaufman.

In *Containments*, Kaufman interrogates what painting does, and does not, manage to contain—formally, conceptually, aesthetico-historically—within the space of a canvas. These abstract paintings draw inspiration from Agnes Martin, Paul Klee, and the daily news—which Kaufman says she reads, watches, and listens to obsessively, if sometimes half-consciously, day in and day out: the repeating news loop as circadian rhythm. But while occasioned by art history and the very often hostile intrusions of contemporary politics—containment can mean keeping something harmful under control or within limits—Kaufman’s work hushes its subject matter, allowing the ideas or influences behind it to remain just that: behind, like yesterday’s half-read newspaper on which is scribbled this morning’s grocery list.



Red Carpet, 2018, latex and acrylic on canvas, 60"



Grave, 2010, oil on canvas 48"x60"



Dissolution, 2018, acrylic, latex and charcoal on linen, 72"x72"

To contain something or someone is to control or restrain, but also to have or to hold within. There is no containing without edge. Maybe that is why Kaufman is especially concerned with edges: thick, thin, taped, occluded, dripped, erased, bled edges that can be the optical product of abutting planes or otherwise a hard, painted line. One edge often found in Kaufman’s work has the look and feel of a horizon. Such a line appears in “Soon Dawn Appeared and Touched the Sky With Roses” (named for Emily Wilson’s re-translation of “rosy-fingered dawn” in her *Odyssey*). The canvas is a sandpaper dune edged with pink that has the smooth pink-white shine of a fingernail. The landscape format is recurrent; Kaufman tends towards paintings with the dimensions and divisions of landscape, though she prefers the straight perpendicular axes of the grid to the orthogonal sweep of perspective. Despite the sense of a landscape, these paintings inch along a plane before they take a measure of depth.