



Portals

I am not motivated to paint objects that are recognizable as such. Doing so belies an action whose aim is to occupy short spans of attention, like advertising. Instead, my reason for speaking in the medium of painting is precisely because it occupies time in a weirder, less linear way.

Or rather: what is unknown, un-recognizable, in that it looms spectre-like beyond our field of vision or floats to the top, like minerals in water. Call that magical practices, science fiction, modeling, fortune-telling, etc.

I am not speaking about the duality of representation and abstraction. Let's go back to Jo Baer, and what she says about illusion on flat surfaces: it is and has always been "some" fiction. How you enact that is up to you.

*Space illusions are from the Renaissance, where their painted distances carried a subliminal teleology... A painting is an object which has an emphatic frontal surface... Every part is painted and contiguous to its neighbor: no part looks like it is above or below any other part. There is no hierarchy. There is no ambiguity. There is no illusion. There is no space or interval (time). Some antique.*¹

Windows-in-painting have always been the portal to the flat-ness, non-illusion of painting. From Friedrich, Matisse, Mondrian, to Baer and her doubled edges as frames of non-space.

I am trying to show the form/body that is present through its absence.

Where do women artists make? Baer, it turns out, was the head of the Orchid Society of New York in the 1960s, with a small room in the center of her Manhattan apartment dedicated to growing rare flowers. I have spent twenty years supporting and loving my women artist friends, like gardening in the toxic, weedy art world. This is not representational feminism. I'm not going to give you that on a plate as depicted content.

I am looking from inside out of their spaces, through an other's eyes, aware of forgotten genealogies and aware of codifying new ones. Call it magic, science fiction, modeling, fortune-telling, etc: whatever you want.

Instead, portals open to the unknown, the weird², the stuff that comes not out of imagination but triggers it, and then switches back to just *stuff*. Painting is a time portal: its surface, like water, is the same earthen pigment of the long past and the future; motifs repeat, re-contextualize. It speaks through a specific non-time of painterly illusionistic space, it drops into now, it somehow lives into the unknown future. (Gordon, 2024)

¹ Letter to Bob Morris from Jo Baer, July 29, 1967.

² "The allure that the weird and the eerie possess...has...to do with a fascination for the outside, for that which lies beyond standard perception, cognition and experience." Mark Fischer: The Weird and the Eerie (2016).