

Jane Swavely: *Paintings*
January 11–February 24, 2023
Level One

Magenta Plains is pleased to present *Paintings*, a solo exhibition of new oil on canvas works by New York-based painter, Jane Swavely. Swavely's abstractions attempt to reconcile romanticism and minimalism while referencing natural landscapes and cinematic elements. By working with her canvases flat on the floor, she allows gravity to shape them, resulting in paintings that possess an insistent objecthood. Intense areas of color are set against zones where paint has been wiped from the surface, revealing undertones and vestigial forms.

Swavely's practice is intuitive and comes from the artist's subconscious, each work an expression of a lingering thought. Compositionally, visual evocations of screens and portals are constant in the work, coming from Swavely's lifelong experience as a connoisseur of film and the ever-presence of screens in her day to day. An illusive silver tone is common throughout, appearing intensely reflective and polished in some works and a tarnished patina in others. When combined with rich pigmented color otherwise present in her paintings the results can be emulsive and luminous, recalling some alchemical consequence.

Working on the Bowery since the early 1980s, Jane Swavely has been an active participant in many of the most pertinent scenes in downtown New York in the last half century. In her early years Swavely studied at Boston University during Philip Guston's tenure and worked as an assistant for both Brice Marden and Lois Lane, firmly situating her developing practice within crucial niches of American abstraction. That legacy is clearly visible, albeit inverted and reframed, in her contemporary work. Even so, the works in this exhibition radiate an almost loving attention to their smaller facets, inviting the viewer to experience them as objects with physicality instead of as representations. Swavely demonstrates a fully realized visual language, one over which she displays a deft and nuanced authority.

Jane Swavely (b. 1959, Allentown, PA) attended Boston University College of Fine Arts, eventually moving to New York City and settling into her Bowery loft in the early 1980s. In 1986 at the age of twenty-five, she held her first solo-show at CDS Gallery, where she was part of the CDS Gallery roster until 2005. As her career progressed, Swavely became part of A.I.R, a legendary female-run art space founded in the 1970s. A.I.R provided her with five solo exhibitions from 2011-2022, showcasing the depth and breadth of her talent over the years.

Swavely has held solo exhibitions at the New Arts Program, Kutztown, PA; Loyola College, Baltimore, MD; and the Mandeville Gallery at Union College in Schenectady, NY. She has exhibited her paintings in group exhibitions in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, St. Louis, Philadelphia, Nashville, and abroad. Swavely is the recipient of a Ford Foundation Fellowship. Her work is in numerous public and private collections, including the JPMorgan Chase Art Collection and the Allentown Art Museum in Pennsylvania. She currently lives in her loft on the Bowery in New York City and maintains a studio in Hudson Valley, New York.