

Janis Provisor: *You Know What I Mean***November 6–December 20, 2025****Lower Level**

Magenta Plains is pleased to present Janis Provisor: *You Know What I Mean*, an exhibition of new paintings and works on paper. Provisor has become known for her psychologically resonant and visceral works that verge on the boundary between abstraction and figuration. Inspired by an impressionistic investigation of the body, Provisor often renders a recognizable figure or object presence in her paintings, conveying the liminal state of internal experience. She embraces the moment of emotion in her approach to a new canvas, often beginning by scribbling handwritten stream of consciousness thoughts across the surface which sometimes become partially or completely covered.

Eyes, faces, and other figurative allusions often appear across the picture plane in service of her experiments in color. Using liquid watercolor that pools, curdles, drips and crackles, Provisor leaves cautious subtlety by the wayside in favor of a confident compositional strategy. Hot, dense, and airy colors predominate, often set against white, red and black grounds. Provisor achieves almost every alchemical possibility in paint: opacity, translucency, fluidity, and powderiness. She renders loose geometric structures with a wide brush and tighter, looping scrawls that have a glyph-like nature. Dots, or “holes” punctuate and perforate the surfaces while grids and blocks tumble in a candy crush. Misty, spectral forms appear and dissipate like condensation on a window, and striations from brush hairs leave tracks that ground us in the plasticity of paint.

Meanwhile, Provisor’s works on paper stand as autonomous compositions, not preparatory sketches. Here she isolates formal and chromatic concerns—an acid yellow, an aqueous teal—sharpening her focus on the expressive possibilities of color and stroke. What is shared between both mediums is Provisor’s tangible painterly attitude; no marks laid down by the artist are by accident, and her concern with the intersection of color and form are paramount. Provisor allows us to be privy to her intuitions and subconscious, as the mere act of looking provokes moments to witness both closure and openness. Her paintings both function as cold, smooth vessels that somehow spill a warm, unfiltered flow from every side.

You Know What I Mean embodies the newest direction of Provisor’s long-standing artistic production. Drawing together the threads of her decades-long practice, these works do more than synthesize experience. They reaffirm painting as the medium through which Provisor reclaims, reimagines, and renews her voice, with a clarity and boldness that feel at once hard-won and utterly present.

Provisor has been present in New York scene since 1978. She exhibited at New York’s prestigious Holly Solomon Gallery alongside Judy Pfaff, Brad Davis, Kim MacConnel, and Mary Heilman. During this period, she also exhibited at Barbara Toll Gallery in New York, Hanson Fuller Gallery in San Francisco, and Dorothy Goldeen Gallery in Los Angeles. In 1989 Provisor was invited by prestigious printmaking studio, Crown Point Press, to make prints in China. In 1993 Provisor moved with her family to Hangzhou, CN and Hong Kong for what was planned as a year’s sabbatical from New York but stayed for nine years. While there, she and her husband, Brad Davis, founded Fort Street Studio, a company dedicated to making hand-knotted silk carpets. In 2021, Rizzoli published a book on this adventure titled *Tale of Warp and Weft*.

Janis Provisor (b. 1946, Brooklyn, NY) studied at the University of Michigan–Ann Arbor, and at the San Francisco Art Institute, where she earned a B.F.A. (1969) and an M.F.A. (1971).

Her work has been exhibited at numerous public institutions, including the San Francisco Art Institute, CA; the New Museum, New York, NY; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; the Brooklyn Museum, NY; Aspen Art Museum, CO; the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington D.C.; the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, CA; New Orleans Museum of Art, LA; Crown Point Press, San Francisco, CA; Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, TW; Tucson Museum of Art, AZ, and many others.

Her work is included in several public museum collections, such as the Brooklyn Museum, NY; Buffalo AKG Museum, NY; the Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY; Mumok, Vienna, AT; the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; the RISD Museum, Providence, RI; Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, CA; San Diego Museum of Art, CA; Santa Barbara Museum of Art, CA; Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, MA; Tucson Art Museum, AZ; Phoenix Art Museum, AZ; and Yale Art Gallery, New Haven, CT. Provisor divides her time between New York City and Litchfield, CT.