

The New York Times

3 Art Gallery Shows to See Right Now

Clare Grill

Through April 24. Derek Eller Gallery, 300 Broome Street, Manhattan; 212-206-6411, derekeller.com.



Clare Grill's "Vein," from 2020, in the exhibition "There's the Air." Clare Grill and Derek Eller Gallery

In an unusually personal publicity release for her show "[There's the Air](#)," the painter Clare Grill, who was born in Chicago and now lives and works in Queens, writes about miscarriages, grief and the significance of naming. A friend suggests that naming a baby the artist has lost will help her let it go; her paintings only get their terse, one-word titles when they're finished.

Grill may work on a given piece for years, adding paint and scraping it away again in an improvised journey toward a sort of monochrome interrupted by a rain of contrasting marks. The marks themselves can vary widely, from simple brush strokes to forms that look like twigs, roman letters, or balls of incandescent gas. In "Vein," six broad strokes of color float like flower petals or a deconstructed Chinese character against a ground of nocturnal bluish-black. Grill works on her paintings horizontally, and in the muted purple "Trumpet," she incorporated a shadow that happened to cross the canvas into the composition. All nine paintings in the show have a gauzy depth of surface that made me think of dust motes floating in a column of light.

"These paintings aren't about grief or loss or anything really," she writes, "but they've been made in it and with it." She's talking about her own losses and about the lost year we've all just had, but she could also be talking about the creative process. Every painting that gets a name is shadowed by countless others that didn't. WILL HEINRICH