

# DEREK ELLER GALLERY

## CLARE GRILL

*There's the Air*

March 25 - April 24, 2021

Opening Reception: Thursday, March 25, 12- 7 pm



My friend Mary had a miscarriage 14 years ago and she named the baby Cass. I'll never forget that name. She had a feeling it was a girl, but it was too soon to find out, so she chose Cass. She suggested I name the ones I lost too. I lost three in the span of 8 months. It was about a year ago. She thought it would help heal my heart, give some closure to call them a name. I suppose we name to show love, to honor, to let live, to let go.

We name paintings when they become paintings. I name mine only when I recognize them, at the end when they're ready to breathe on their own. When they don't need me anymore, then they get their names.

Young girls in the 18<sup>th</sup> c. made mourning samplers to commemorate the death of younger siblings or parents. They stitched cypress trees into their embroideries as symbols of grief and eternity. Cypress trees are called "The Mournful Trees." They've been a symbol of death and sadness for over 2000 years. Their upright shape points to eternity in the sky. Willows too: a girl draped over a tomb surrounded by graceful weeping willows and cypress pointing straight up to heaven. It was fashionable then for women to mourn publicly. In the Victorian era there was an entire etiquette surrounding mourning: black veils, armbands, heavy black dresses. Melancholy was considered a distinctly feminine zone. I don't know about that.

I've made this work through this time, with this grief. There's been so much of it. It's in people's peering, shining eyes or it's zipped deep inside their winter coats. It's been a time of profound loss. Some people talk about it, some don't.

These paintings aren't about grief or loss or anything really, but they've been made in it and with it. They've absorbed it, been touched by it. They've been steeped in it these past couple years, flooded and then aired out, stitched over time with version upon version of it. They're ready to go now. They have their names.

My favorite name is Frances. It's what we named our daughter in 2017. We call her Fanny. And everyday there she is. There is Fanny. She is here. She's right here. Fanny. Frances. Fan.

- Clare Grill, 2021

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Derek Eller Gallery is pleased to present *There's the Air*, an exhibition of new paintings by Clare Grill which find inspiration in antique commemorative documents like birth certificates and embroidered samplers. Some of the formal elements from this source material are deeply embedded in Grill's richly layered oil paintings. Created on a tabletop surface in a kind of improvisational process, these paintings emerge from a series of gestures and color choices, both reductive and additive, which is guided by raking ambient light in the studio. Texture and shadow materialize, formal relationships and shapes are pulled forward or buried down, colors are refined or muted. For Grill, this intuitive process, which can last for months or even years, results in a painting which is ready to breathe on its own and can finally be given a name.

Originally from Chicago, Clare Grill (born 1979) lives and works in Queens, NY. She received her MFA from the Pratt Institute in 2005, and attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2011. Solo exhibitions include Zieher Smith & Horton Gallery (New York), Reserve Ames (Los Angeles, CA), Soloway Gallery (Brooklyn, NY), and Diane Rosenstein Gallery (Los Angeles, CA). Her work has been exhibited in group shows in Chicago, Houston, Seattle, St. Louis, New York, Hawaii, San Francisco, Guadalajara, London, Bologna and Denmark. Grill was a 2017 recipient of a Steep Rock Arts residency in Roxbury, CT and was the Fall 2017 Artist-in-Residence at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.

Derek Eller Gallery is located at 300 Broome Street between Eldridge Street and Forsyth Street. Hours are Tuesday - Saturday 11am to 6pm, and by appointment. For further information please contact the gallery at 212.206.6411 or visit [www.derekeller.com](http://www.derekeller.com)