

DEREK ELLER GALLERY

CLARE GRILL

At the Soft Stages

May 31 – June 30, 2023

**Opening Reception: Wednesday,
May 30, 6–8pm**



Compass, 2023, oil on linen, 94 x 73 in.

Derek Eller Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition of new paintings by Clare Grill entitled *At the Soft Stages*. Grill's luminous, layered compositions teeter between recognizable forms and something familiar but abstract. Her vast vocabulary of shapes, colors, and compositional choices is inspired by antique embroidery samplers, as well as highly decorated birth, baptismal, and marriage certificates from the 18th and 19th centuries. Born out of intuitive decisions which are frequently guided by natural occurrences like daylight and shadow

falling across the surface, Grill's paintings are documents of marks made with brush or with fingers, of colors added or removed. In essence, they tell the story of the artist's process and the passage of time.

Over the last eighteen months, Grill has been using a thicker medium in her practice, one that doesn't cause the paint to slip away when touched. It's soft, but not liquid, with a consistency more like wax or vaseline. It holds together, drags on the fabric and leaves a quiet record of how the paint touches it. The viscous medium also brings out the nubby, pilly imperfections of the linen support, highlighting the nuances in its weave. Grill carefully surveys the surface when deciding what to do next. "I look at what the surface is showing me, at what just happened, in order to see what part needs to be touched next, to be beckoned forward or quieted," she writes, "I have to be patient. I have to watch them."

Grill's method of painting, with its visceral and controlled application of medium to ground, can be likened to the image of a handprint in the sidewalk. The handprint, she explains, "is a record of touch, literally. The concrete has to be stiff enough that it will hold onto the shape pressed into it, without leveling, but also soft enough that it will

give. It's like a compromise, a collaboration between two materials, one in a state where it can receive, one in a state that trusts it's ok to change the other. It's using your hands to mark time, to make it stand still, in a soft material”.

Clare Grill (b. 1979; Chicago, IL) 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. Her work is currently on view in the group exhibition *The Feminine in Abstract Painting* at the Milton Resnick and Pat Pasloff Foundation, New York, NY. Solo exhibitions include *Oyster*, M + B Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; *Touch'd Lustre*, Zieher Smith & Horton Gallery, New York, NY; *Reserve Ames*, Los Angeles, CA; *Comb*, Soloway Gallery, Brooklyn, NY; and *Mary, Mary*, Diane Rosenstein Gallery, Los Angeles, CA. Her work has been exhibited in group shows at Kate Werble Gallery, New York, NY; Reynolds Gallery, Richmond, VA; Nancy Littlejohn Fine Art in Houston, TX; University of Hawaii at Manoa Art Gallery, Honolulu, HI; Paramo in Guadalajara, Mexico; Josh Lilley Gallery in London, UK; P420, Bologna, Italy; LVL3 in Chicago, IL; Galleri Jacob Bjorn, Aarhus, Denmark; George Lawson Gallery, San Francisco, CA; and Center on Contemporary Art in Seattle, WA. This will be her second solo exhibition with the gallery.

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.