

ESSEX STREET/MAXWELL GRAHAM

Zak Prekop
Mirrored Weeks
March 17 - April 25, 2021

1.
Phases, 2020
Oil on muslin
96 × 64 inches (243.84 × 162.56 cm)

2.
Birds and Crickets, 2020
Oil on muslin
96 × 64 inches (243.84 × 162.56 cm)

3.
Having Never Written Music, 2021
Oil on muslin
96 × 64 inches (243.84 × 162.56 cm)

4,
Tamalpais, 2021
Oil on linen
68 × 48 inches (172.72 × 121.92 cm)

5.
New Drone, 2021
Oil on canvas
68 × 54 inches (172.72 × 137.16 cm)

6.
Tenney, 2021
Oil on muslin
40 × 34 inches (101.60 × 86.36 cm)

7.
Late Night Work, 2021
Oil on muslin
14 × 15 inches (35.56 × 38.10 cm)

Upstairs:

8.
Mirror Non Mirror, 2021
Oil on canvas
28 × 24 inches (71.12 × 60.96 cm)

I started the painting *Phases* several years ago but set it aside until I revisited it last year. The title references this overall timespan and its subdivision into shorter periods. It also refers to phases of the moon, which I laid out in twenty-four circles in the painting's foreground. The circles are pink and blue in varying proportions depending on the forms that are

ESSEX STREET/MAXWELL GRAHAM

passing underneath. This illusion of transparency is really one layer's responsiveness to the layers and forms behind it. I like to think of each component of my paintings as responsive to the other, so the whole thing becomes a unified organism or natural system. I also like how the title sounds like a prog rock album, which I think suits the painting.

I found a sequence of words jotted down to remember a setup for some music I made in the spring last year. Birds-Crickets-Microphone-DelayPedal-Amp-Feedback. I had a microphone hanging out of the window of my studio which captured the sounds of birds and crickets, which I then ran back into the studio through a delay pedal and amp upon which I controlled the volume to just start feeding back. Both this painting and that music begin with a sort of non-empty space - the raw canvas within a form and the sound of nothing happening outside.

Having Never Written Music also attempts a kind of negative expression. I wanted to see what a painting of mine could be without any variations in line or color and without any real background and foreground, just a continuous space. I think this painting works well seen from very close up, so one can lose sight of the painting's edges. The composer James Tenney has a percussion piece, played on a gong, titled *Having Never Written a Note for Percussion*.

Tamalpais is a mountain in California that I heard mentioned in a David Crosby song. I subsequently learned that Etel Adnan paints this mountain and titles many of her paintings after it.

The title *New Drone* is a kind of oxymoron. A drone suggests an endless time frame that inherently cannot be new. This painting has more contrasting colors and forms than a lot of my paintings do. I tried to put more information into the painting until it began to get quiet again, just past the busyness of its intersecting layers and forms. That is often how I decide when a painting is finished, when I have just regained control of the picture, with an idea that either weaves all the parts together or separates them to create space.

The James Tenney piece I really love is titled *For Percussion Perhaps, Or...* It feels like it came to life on its own, no composer or musician, a kind of animism.

I worked on the small painting, *Late Night Work*, all year while painting the other paintings in the exhibition. It has been a constant on my wall while all the other works go up and down as I figure them out. The concentric lines are actually smaller and smaller layers of alternating black and white fields on top of one another. With drying time, it takes a while to do. Each layer in my paintings are responsive to the layers beneath them, but each form is also responsive to the other forms across the surface. The concentric lines created by the receding layers of paint either amplify or smooth out the particularities of the edges that they radiate from.

Mirror Non Mirror is and is not a mirror in a few ways. I began the painting with a not entirely asymmetrical composition and proceeded by tracing and superimposing a mirror image of that composition on top of itself, but only painting in some areas. I repeated this process with different colors and within different components of the resulting compositions. The painting mirrors itself from left to right and from right to left but not entirely nor accurately. The framing of the image creates a mirror-like form but for an entirely non-reflective surface.