



6018 Wilshire Blvd.,
323.525.0053

Los Angeles, CA 90036
www.edwardcella.com

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ECAA ANNOUNCES A SOLO EXHIBITION ENTITLED:

Claire Anna Baker: SunBody
March 16 – April 27, 2013

Opening Reception:
Saturday March 16th, 6-8pm

(Los Angeles) - Edward Cella Art + Architecture is pleased to present the gallery's first solo exhibition of work by emerging Los Angeles based artist Claire Baker. Baker is an abstract painter who strives to harness the spontaneity of gesture through the deliberation of strategy. *SunBody*, her newest series of large format paintings, thoughtfully negotiates this fine balance between meditative and active impulses, resulting in works that are mindful and yet dynamically extemporaneous. Deploying innovative tools and materials, Baker creates unique non-representational paintings with a very distinct visual quality.



The artist's practice is informed by a deliberate approach to abstraction. Baker denotes physical time and space in her paintings with gesture and movement, capturing the spatial poetics of "moments" and phenomena as they are observed and experienced in her studio. Baker translates her observations of environmental space into abstract representational vocabularies she distills through deliberate gestures. These scripted motions can be likened to a system of spatial semiotics, not unlike their linguistic counterpart, as signs charged with meaning and used systematically as "speech" or script. The execution of her carefully choreographed work is deliberated rather than automatic; the gestures speculative and mindful rather than reactive and unmediated. Formally however, the work conveys the vitality of action painting, combining a seemingly disparate and conflicting set of impulses.

SunBody evolved from deconstructive preliminary drawings used to isolate a series of spontaneous gestural leitmotifs, before their final synthesis into large format paintings. Baker develops an initial body of signs and expands upon each spatial and gestural theme mindfully, allowing them to evolve into large scale works. Each painting is representative of a distinct

gesture or character, while together the gestures coexist as a sequence or script. The recondite quality of the paintings is the result of a rare combination of mysticism and methodology; the work conveys the elusiveness of the poetic with the careful deliberation and structure of the semiotician.

The work is created with the unique use of customized implements and synthetic materials to perfect the execution and control of her gestures. Claire Baker uses custom made painting knives to extend the field of her movement and mark making. The gestures are in effect an extension of her body, activated by large sweeping and scraping movements on a human scale. The paintings are the direct result of a corporeal activation of space, and the body figures prominently as an agent of the pictorial field. The artist uses highly refined synthetic inks on a nylon canvas substrate to create a very smooth and refined paint application and surface; a material strategy unique to Baker's work. By using synthetic industrial materials to create matte fluid traces of gestural movement, Baker engages the opposition of artificial and organic aesthetics. While her work can be likened to a tradition of post-war American abstract expressionist painting, particularly the work of Franz Kline, Baker innovatively revitalizes this gestural and spatial tradition with a contemporary approach to materials, palette, and form. Baker is also influenced by British Surrealist artist Graham Sutherland, known for his use of partial abstraction to explore the inherent strangeness of natural forms and landscapes.

Claire Baker completed her MFA in Painting at UCLA in 2008, after completing her BA in Visual Art at Brown University with Honors in 2005. Baker received a Pollock-Krasner Grant in 2011 and participated in the Kaus Australis residency in The Netherlands in 2012. Baker's work will be included in *Abstraction*, a concurrent group exhibition at the Irvine Arts Center, in Irvine California.

Special Exhibition Program

Exhibition Talk with Claire Anna Baker and Steve Schmidt

Saturday, March 23, 2013 at 2 pm

Join independent curator, Carl Berg and artists Claire Anna Baker and Steve Schmidt for an informal tour of the exhibitions offering insights into their diverse and contrasting projects.

For press inquiries, images, or general questions contact:

Marieke Treilhard / 323.525.0053

marieke@edwardcella.com

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Image: Claire Baker, *Fighter Flight*, 2013. Ink on Polyester, 60" x 84", (image detail).