

# Devening Projects

TL Solien | The Lonesome Dervish | January 16 - February, 19 2022

Devening Projects is very excited to present *The Lonesome Dervish*, TL Solien's first solo exhibition at the gallery. The show opens with a reception for the artist on Sunday, January 16 and continues until February 19, 2022.

What one recognizes first in the paintings featured in this show is exuberance, delirious color and forceful imagery. The urgency formed in this work drives it momentarily forward. Thrilling and dangerous, these are paintings made during a calamitous time. What may be impossible to ignore is how perfectly the work reflects the state of our current political and social climate. Fractured, noisy, at times absurdist and often populated by buffoons and fools, we're looking at one artist's unfiltered view of his world. Faceted swaths of canvas set an unsettled stage occasionally populated by some foolishly attired and behatted bozo. The rupturing of the field sets the stage for the most important new elements of TL's recent work.

TL Solien is a master juggler. The work he's made professionally for more than 50 years continues to suggest a strange hybrid of pathos and comedy. The narratives he weaves tell stories of actors moving through some desperate and dystopian world. But maybe these are self-portraits and he's the protagonist. In either case, we see clowns, politicians and feeble performers dressed up and presented for our entertainment and pity.

Shifts have occurred and interesting things have happened recently in his paintings and works on paper. Alarmed and disgusted by the 2016 election tampering and the resulting Senate hearings on Russian involvement, his paintings emptied out and used almost pure abstraction to define a new visual language. Once the figures left, what remained could be seen as the divisive and combative—and uncooperative—force of two entities. Here is where the fragmentation of TL's paintings come to the fore. The project began as a series of small "Senate" paintings that attempted to channel the frustration of the deflection and hypocrisy of the hearings. The white lines in these paintings appear rigid and constricting; the color behind pulses and pushes forward. There seems to be little attempt at harmony or concession. These paintings are the genesis of *The Lonesome Dervish*.

For this show, TL shares an evolution of his thinking process and the experience of living in a world that sometimes values entertainment over truth. He's also sharing the power of his medium to illustrate and process these complex and troubling issues. These paintings celebrate all that painting can offer—light, color, gesture, space and story—while nakedly revealing a world that is upside down and sometimes feels close to collapse.

TL most recently had a mid-career survey at The Nemeth Art Center in Minnesota and has had solo exhibitions at institutions including The Madison Museum of Contemporary Art in Wisconsin, Bowling Green State University's Museum of Art in Ohio, The Des Moines Art Center in Iowa and The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth in Texas. His works have been shown in group exhibitions at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, among many other galleries and museums.

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