

# Tanya Leighton

Press Release

Elizabeth McIntosh  
'GROW UP'

27 April – 15 June 2024  
Preview: Friday 26 April, 6–9 pm

Tanya Leighton, Berlin, is pleased to announce 'Grow Up', a solo-exhibition by Elizabeth McIntosh. An experiment in graphic abstraction, McIntosh's paintings are a joyful assemblage of colours and forms that parade across the canvas.

'Grow Up' can be read as an act of imploration, as a finger wagging playfully, as a joke between friends. It is tongue in cheek, which is to say that it can be construed differently depending on the cadence of speech or intonation. 'Grow Up' is also quite literally a large graffiti tag in Vancouver that McIntosh snapped a photo of as she drove by. This kind of foraging approach – collecting found images, references, snippets of art history or sketches from McIntosh's own sketchbook – is immediately apparent in the stratified blocks and swathes of colours and forms (a collage-effect that harkens back to former bodies of work). Yet, in typical fashion, McIntosh's paintings also display a playful approach, a constant experimentation akin to 'growing up': they are learning, employing intuition, adjusting based on past experience.

McIntosh employs the use of frames that act as latticed windows into the works. The layers and transparencies create a peripheral space that make the viewer aware of the process of looking. We are implicated in our gaze as we puzzle through the forms and figures on the canvas. There is a mischievous sort of reciprocity between McIntosh, the work and her audience. While this layering could have a distancing effect – bordering on voyeurism – it is also a channel for intimacy (like being able to glimpse into a family home at dusk before they draw the curtains, looking into a space that is both alien and familiar).

McIntosh also draws on visual quotations from the early modernist era of painting – a time that was ripe with experimentation, directness and new formal structures – as well as her own doodles, memories or family photos. While the background may feature appropriated imagery, the main protagonists of her canvases are drawn from life.

The works oscillate between figuration and abstraction, improvisation and design. She dances between references that interweave cropped figurations from art history with a strawberry or an ice cream cone: motifs taken from her daughter's embroidered suede purse.

McIntosh's free jazz approach embodies improvisation that mirrors a form of play. It feels that we, as viewers, are learning and inventing alongside McIntosh in 'Grow Up', in a gentle homage to a youth that slips through our fingers when we're not looking, perhaps only able to be remembered via paint on canvas.

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Elizabeth McIntosh (born 1967 in Simcoe, Ontario) lives and works in Vancouver, Canada. She is a professor at Emily Carr University of Art and Design, Vancouver. McIntosh received her Master of Fine Arts Degree in Painting in 1996 from Chelsea College of Art and Design, London, and her Bachelor of Arts in 1992, from York University, Toronto.

Her most recent solo exhibitions include 'A Ball is for Throwing' at CANADA, New York in 2022; 'Family' at Tanya Leighton, Los Angeles in 2021; 'Show up' at Oakville Galleries, Toronto and 'Mom or Mother' at Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver, both in 2020; and 'Night Sweat' at Tanya Leighton, Berlin in 2019.

McIntosh has received numerous awards, public commissions and grants, including the Fogo Island Artist Residency. Her work is held in the collections of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; and Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, among others.

For more information please contact [info@tanyaleighton.com](mailto:info@tanyaleighton.com) or telephone +49(0)30 221607770.

The gallery is open Tuesday to Saturday, 11 am–6 pm and by appointment.