



LINES WITHOUT OUTLINES  
EVE ASCHHEIM

AUGUST 12 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2017

**'T' Space**  
RHINEBECK



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COVER AND PAGES 4 - 5:  
*SPACE-TIME LACK* (2011), OIL AND GRAPHITE ON CANVASBOARD, 11" X 14"

PAGE 7:  
*STOP AND GO* (2015), OIL AND GRAPHITE ON CANVAS ON PANEL, 22" X 17"





# LINES WITHOUT OUTLINES: ON THE WORK OF EVE ASCHHEIM

**SUSAN STEWART**

The parabola figured by a surging fountain, a puzzling solo track in snow, a stitch piercing a piece of cloth, a splinter, a scar, a hard impression left deep in a pad of paper, a swatch of fabric faded by sunlight. Or a sudden sensation of flying, an intuition of other planes, other worlds, dimensions of light glimpsed behind what can be grasped.

Encountering the work of Eve Aschheim, the viewer discovers that such images, concrete like the first set, or sublime like the second—and sometimes both—will come to mind. Yet what unites them is the very sense of “coming to mind,” a practice that grows from the deepest Western traditions of painting and drawing and as well abstracts or lifts such practices from their conventional frames.

Aschheim continually underscores a central tenet of the arts of the line: regardless of their mediums and supports, drawing and painting arise from, and follow from, the subjective intention to make a mark. That mark then may be followed by more marks until the painter who is drawing/ the draughtswoman who is painting decides that her intention is fulfilled. The where and when of the painted mark are surely shaped by a plethora of contingent forces—history, psychology, biology, weather, the social organization of artistic work—and the process of making itself constantly offers opportunities for revision. But the initial mark is *meant* and within the space and time of the work, the maker and her viewer share in an understanding that the painter has had an aim to aim as she produces significant forms.

The very word *intention*, stemming from Latin and Old French words for “stretching” and “fulfilling a purpose,” and accompanied by a medical connotation of “healing a wound,” carries within it a gloss on this process. In 1435-1436, in *Della pittura*, his treatise on the new perspective theory, Leon Battista Alberti asserted that an expression of subjective desire was at the start of the most rational of painting practices. There he describes the technique for laying out the right-angled grid within a quadrangle that will make up the painting’s field. He then writes, “within the quadrangle, where it pleases me, I make a point that occupies that place where the central ray strikes.” That freely-determined point, made *where it pleases me*, will found the relation between the beholder

and all “painted things” in the work and extend out into the rationalized space that surrounds it. A literal point of initiation, determined by desire, the founding mark enables the netted space within the painting to extend out into the “real” space of the work’s beholder—and beyond into the imaginary continuation of the work’s internal spaces and the world.

Out of her own initial marks, however, Aschheim’s mode of composition goes in another direction. Her approach is a reversal of Alberti’s, for whereas a Renaissance painter moves from a single point perspective out to the grid of rationalized space, Aschheim begins with an abstraction she thinks of as a “substructure.” This initial structure, flexibly envisioned as lines and spaces, diagonals and scaffolds, interlocking or overlapping, often creates a sense of what she calls “light without weight.” From there, working on as many as ten pieces at once, and frequently using a digital camera to record and return to earlier states, she builds up layers of gesso and drawn and painted surfaces—some opaque, some transparent. Aschheim works free-hand with pencil, brush, palette knife, and small strips of tape, emptying and adding to the substructure as she goes, tweaking and “pinching” in a process that becomes both the work and its referent. Her goal is not to control and fix the space through rational extension, but rather to build depth and intricacy through gestures of making, judging, and re-making.

For the new mylar drawings, executed particularly for this exhibit, Aschheim has been thinking through the scale shifts involved in architectural modeling. Marks on mylar are reversible and drawing on the reverse side, with the mark showing through a frosted translucence, moves the layering technique of her paintings on canvas into three dimensions. Clustering at edges and points of intense motion, sometimes stretching across a void, these lines, too, have a relationship internal to the work itself. Her large drawings, whether viewed from afar or at the painterly distance of an outstretched arm, or somewhere in between, bring the top of the drawing into a looming dominance over the horizon. Although the majority of Aschheim’s paintings and many of her drawings stay within a height of a foot to a foot and a half, her new drawings can stretch to five feet or more. In the range of Aschheim’s own height, they bring a new physicality to her practice. Juxtaposed to the paintings, the lines in her large drawings are thinned as the scale grows, gestures are larger and less controlled. Curved lines, indicating an opening or closing, a moving toward or away, inevitably follow. Her “Smoke Drawing” uses an ink wash and is evocative of her studies of Chinese ink paintings. Yet, whether drawn or painted, the final work emerges as the consequence of deliberation and judgment: no longer a window upon another reality, the relations of marks within the frame have become paramount as their own reality.





Aschheim's practice builds from the history of twentieth century abstraction—she is a New York painter, trained in California, where she was influenced by Elmer Bischoff and Joan Brown, painters who applied abstract expressionism to figurative painting. Her predilection for seriality is indebted to her decades of friendship with Merrill Wagner and Robert Ryman and her work follows from years of conversation as well with the art of Wayne Thiebaud, Jasper Johns, Heidi Glück, Linda Besemer, and the photographer Harvey Himelfarb. These studies in Western art were supplemented by training in calligraphy at the China Institute in New York City in the early 2000s. Aschheim has had a long and distinguished career as a teacher and her initial abstracted structures of “light without weight” are as likely to be taken from a Vermeer shutter or a Bonnard tablecloth as from the shadows of clouds and play of sunlight on the Hudson outside her studio.

Yet Aschheim eschews the boundary between figuration and abstraction by fusing them, making them as inseparable as the very linearity of a boundary. She offers a meditation upon the arts of the intended line—architecture, dance, sculpture, drawing, painting—in light of the larger question of the line of thought itself. Her horizon line paintings underscore especially those questions raised by Hans-Georg Gadamer and other phenomenologists regarding changing horizons of intelligibility. The problem of involving time in understanding is one the painter here evokes by refusing the short-cut of patterns. Each of Aschheim's marks happens once. She asks us to think with her about where to begin, where to aim, where to go deep or rise to the surface, where to digress, where to encounter a block or edge, where to see through and how to turn elsewhere, where to end and where to begin again. The frame becomes the question of another edge—what is within the frame and what is beyond it; the manifested and the invisible, the end-stopped and the infinite.

Inviting the viewer to follow and engage these marks without the predictability of the repeated and the familiar, Aschheim's lines are neither representational nor mere traces or tracks of her prior motion. Following trajectories and layers of individual marks through the work, the viewer experiences the myriad ways motions are connected and disjoined, ideas are stuck, stopped, and transformed, meetings—including the meetings produced by works of art—involve crossing, coincidence, near misses, and shatterings. In the end, it's fair to say that abstractions, particularly the paradigmatic examples of freedom and infinity, resist representation *tout court*—they are by definition supersensible. In Aschheim's work, however, the viewer can come very close to the light of the painter's desire—close enough to enter into a renewed attention beyond our usual habits of mind. \*

PAGE 8:  
*FALLING LIGHT* (2017), OIL ON CANVAS ON PANEL, 20" X 16"

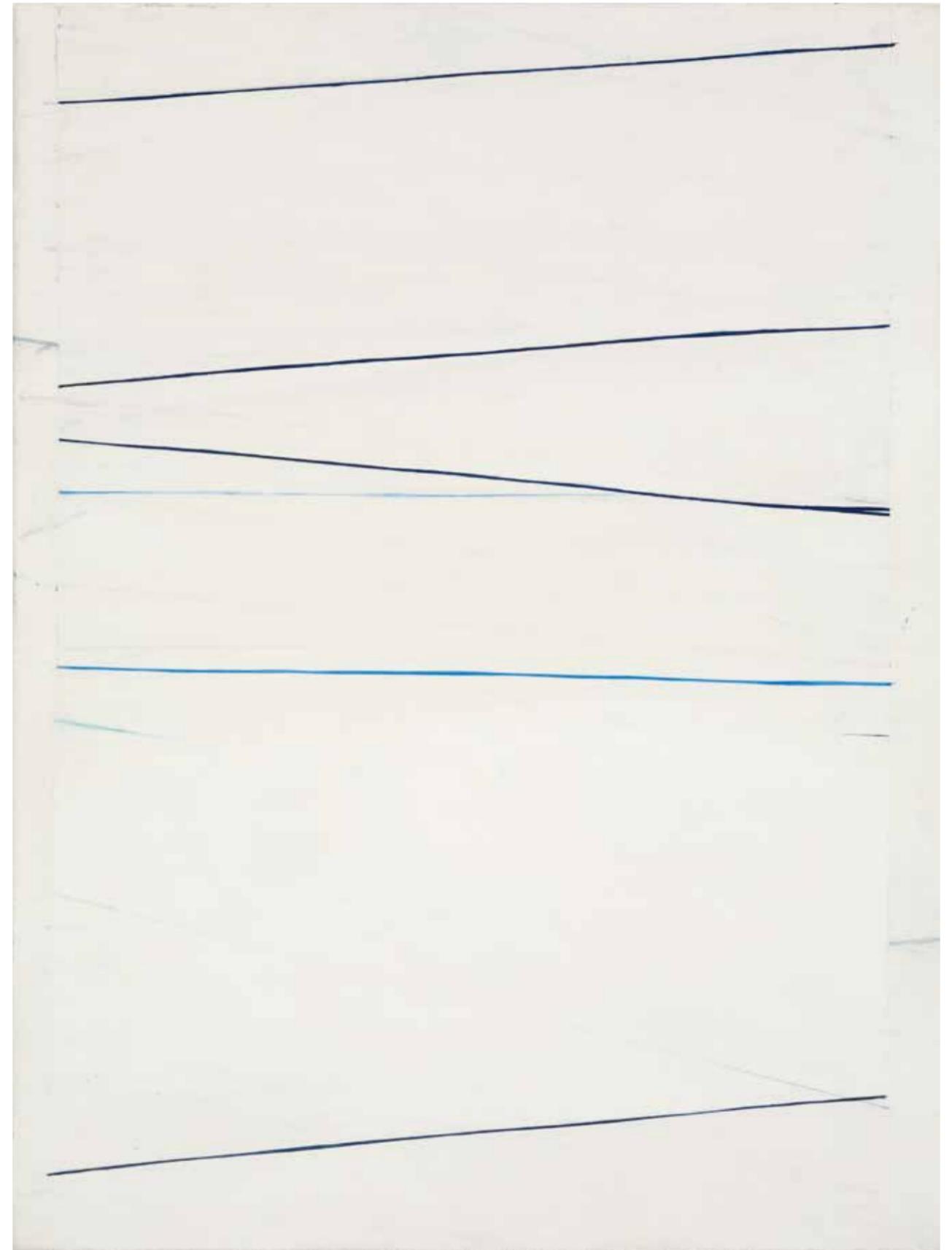
PAGE 11:  
*SLOW CURVE* (2013), OIL ON CANVAS ON PANEL, 16" X 12"

PAGE 12:  
*FALLING TO CURVE* (2017), OIL ON CANVAS ON PANEL, 16" X 12"

PAGE 15:  
*COMPOSITION, SANDED LIGHT* (2013), OIL AND GRAPHITE ON CANVAS ON PANEL, 22" X 17"



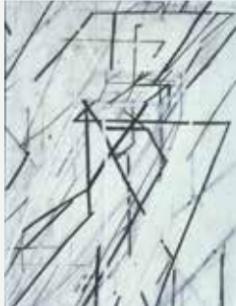








# THE POWER OF LINES TO EVE ASCHHEIM



EVE ASCHHEIM, *THING* (1999), 12" X 9"



HENRI MATISSE, *FRANCHIE SUR DES LITS DE VIOLETTES PASIPHAÉ: CHANT DE MINOS* (1944), 9 3/4" x 12 3/4"

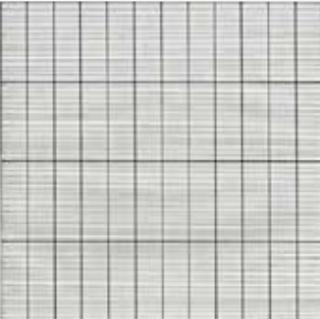


WILLEM DE KOONING, *DARK POND* (1948), 69 1/2" X 79 3/4"

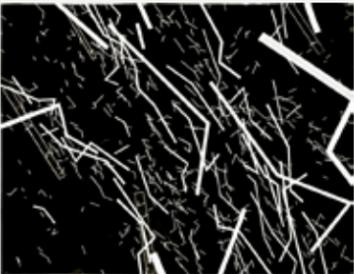


WILLEM DE KOONING, *NIGHT SQUARE* (1948), 30" x 40"

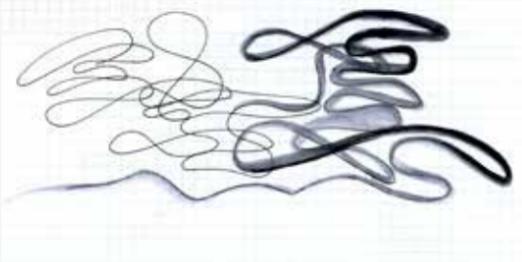
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AGNES MARTIN, *UNTITLED* (1991), 12" X 12"



LEBBEUS WOODS, *CONFLICT SPACE 4* (2006), 74" X 120 "



ZAHA HADID, *CONCEPT SKETCH FOR EDIFICI TORRE ESPIRAL IN BARCELONA* (2006), 5.8" X 8.31"

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, I first encountered the work of painter Eve Aschheim in a small card stock exhibit invitation sent to me by her husband, the poet John Yau. I was immediately captivated by the simple Zen spirit of the painting depicted on the invitation which was entirely made of blue lines, some thick, some thin, some parallel, some askew.

It brought to mind the amazing intensity of the simple line drawings of Matisse, who could capture a poetic élan in a few lines—like the compression of a haiku poem. The painter Franz Kline’s fat slashing black lines have a similar mesmerizing energy.

The white on black line paintings of Willem de Kooning—which he produced with hardware store sign paint between 1946 and 1948 in his studio at 85 Fourth Avenue—are some of his strongest works. On black ground fields, the white lines of painting like *Dark Pond* (1948), or *Night Square* (1949), have an astonishing linear vigor.

The calm obsessive focus of the painter Agnes Martin on lines could be seen in the recent inspiring retrospective at the Guggenheim Museum. I had the joyful chance to meet Agnes in Taos on a few occasions, while working on the Guest House (Turbulence House) of Richard Tuttle and Mei-mei Berssenbrugge. Agnes was a severely independent painter. I remember at a lunch in Taos, when Richard was making a remark about the importance of friends—Agnes said, “I have no friends, and you are one of them!”

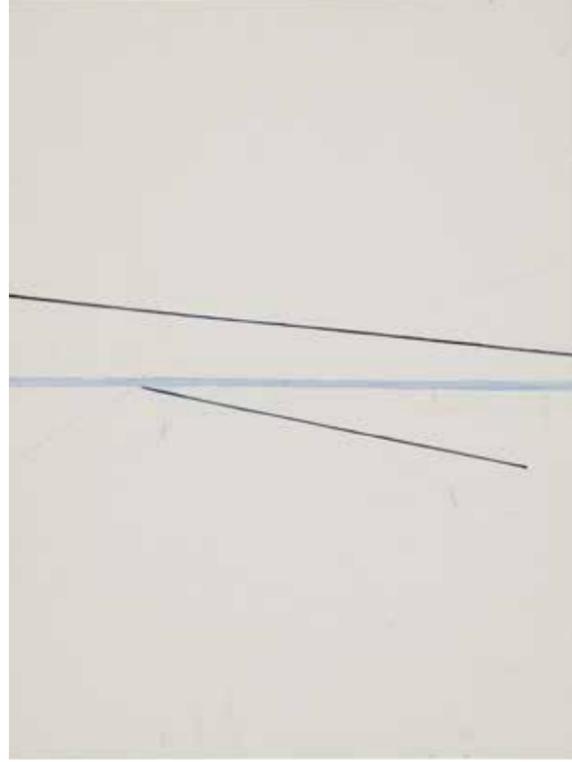
The drawings of the late architect, Lebbeus Woods (1940-2012), also come to mind. Lebbeus’ obsessively energetic linear compositions seemed to be manifestoes of an unknown future. Lebbeus Woods’ drawings for a new tower on the site of the World Trade Center in New York City consisted of a tower of lines continually under construction.

The late architect, Zaha Hadid, had a magic calligraphic talent from which she produced a few simple lines that fixed the central concept for a major work of architecture.

It is a great honor to celebrate the vigor and natural strength of the works of Eve Aschheim at ‘T’ Space. In works of a spiritual energy and force, we are in the simple quiet presence of the power of lines.

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Steven Holl  
6/25/2017



PAGE 26 LEFT:  
LL-1 (2015), OIL, GRAPHITE ON CANVASBOARD, MOUNTED, 14" X 11"

PAGE 26 RIGHT:  
LL-2 (2015), OIL, GRAPHITE ON CANVASBOARD, MOUNTED, 16" X 12"

PAGE 27 LEFT:  
LL-3 (2015), OIL, GRAPHITE ON CANVASBOARD, MOUNTED, 16" X 12"

PAGE 27 RIGHT:  
LL-4 (2015), OIL, GRAPHITE ON CANVASBOARD, MOUNTED, 16" X 12"

PAGE 29:  
LL-6 (2015), OIL, GRAPHITE ON CANVASBOARD, MOUNTED, 16" X 12"





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I dedicate this exhibition to my brother, Mark Aschheim.

**Eve Aschheim**

We are delighted to exhibit the paintings and drawings of Eve Aschheim in 'T' Space's seventh season. Sincere thanks goes to Eve for a truly beautiful and inspiring exhibition. We thank Susan Stewart and Steven Holl for their insightful words, Jim Holl for the handsome design of the catalogue, Dimitra Tsachrelia and Javier Gomez for their kind assistance.

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**Susan Wides**  
Director | Curator  
'T' Space

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