

It's getting grayer and gold and chilly

The biggest catastrophe of painting is the act of painting itself—the attempt to represent, translate, and crystallize into matter a reality that is inherently fleeting and unstable, both in its perception, its signification, and its essence. Yet the first true catastrophe, as Gilles Deleuze writes in his essay on painting, lies in confronting the blank space of the canvas—the void of creation, where everything still exists in potential but has not yet been imagined or reborn.

Known for her fragmented, dreamlike scenes, Anna Glantz has long explored the tension between the inner and the outer world, between figuration and abstraction, between psychological reaction and the semiotic play of visual experience. With this new body of work, Glantz delves further into both the painterly and the existential inquiry—facing not just painting's contradictions, but its ontology. Her project asks what painting *is* and what it *does* in relation to the very structure of reality and our perception of it.

"Painters always pretend to have seen nothing, to know nothing, but then they read and reflect a lot at night," Deleuze also says. I'm sure this is true for Glantz, who hesitates to share images or reflections until the work truly feels "ready." At this point in her artistic trajectory, painting itself—the slow, deliberate process of constructing an image—has become her way of questioning what painting means.

"I would like to paint space and time and make them become forms of the sensibility of colors—sometimes I imagine colors as great noumenal entities, living ideas, creatures of pure reason." Glantz's recent chromatic investigations seem to echo this very reflection by Cézanne. The phenomenon—the study of what appears—is, after all, a numinous path toward the essence of things.

It is perhaps no coincidence that Glantz earned a BA in Art and Linguistics from UCLA before completing her MFA at Columbia University in 2014. There's a linguistic undercurrent to her practice: words seem to hover behind images, ready to crystallize them into meaning and memory before they dissolve back into the flux of fleeting sensory experience or the slippage of digital culture. That tension—between language and color, narrative and silence, persistence and disappearance—is what lends her paintings their low-burning psychological charge.

For Glantz, painting enacts a process of signification in real time, through which form becomes a sign and material begins to carry meaning. A brushstroke, a hue, a recurring motif does not "mean" anything in isolation; significance emerges through relation—through context, repetition, and resonance. Like language, images construct meaning through association, displacement, and recollection.

Facing the catastrophe of painting, as Glantz does, is therefore a post-structuralist undertaking—an attempt to confront difference-in-itself and to challenge the gap between what is grasped and what is represented. She tests new modes of depicting the structure of reality—accepting the collapse of the Renaissance system of perspective, unified composition, and narrative order, while still refusing to abandon figuration entirely. At the core of her inquiry lies a search for the *genesis* of form—an origin that exists before depiction.

Freed from earlier figurative structures, Glantz, like Cézanne and later Morandi, constructs a new pictorial logic: a rhythmic field where forms emerge through chromatic vibration and modulation rather than through line or geometry.

It is perhaps for this reason that Glantz has recently become fascinated by the crystalline architectures of the Venetian school—their ability to hold the void of the canvas and transform it into a radiant structure animated by atmosphere. The particulate, dust-like veil that shimmers across the works of Giorgione and Canaletto offers a model of painting as perpetual metamorphosis: a cangiante movement of matter and energy that painting can only ever approximate. In Glantz's work, color becomes a metaphysical membrane through which the world reveals its ceaseless transformations.

Much like Cézanne before her, and Morandi after, Glantz's painting opens toward the sensible event: the raw encounter with sensation before it is filtered by thought. Her canvases seem to re-enact the chemistry of perception itself—the amalgamation of pigments and light that gives birth to our notion of the real. In this sense, her approach echoes Maurice Merleau-Ponty's claim that painting constitutes a true "Phenomenology of Perception," translating the pre-reflective encounter between body and world into visible form.

Ultimately, for Glantz, painting is no longer about representation but revelation: it shows how we inhabit the world through our senses and cognitive faculties.

In constructing rather than merely visualizing an image, Glantz is deeply attentive to surface—the way she sands, scrapes, and paints over each layer, reworking color, texture, and form to rematerialize perception itself. Her process becomes a kind of geology of vision, building strata through which the eye organizes its experience into shape.

"The world rarely looks so calmed or precious as it does through the viewfinder of a medium-format twin-lens reflex camera—the camera of Doisneau, Capa, Arbus, and Japanese photographer Rinko Kawauchi," writes Brian Dillon in an essay Glantz recently revisited. Photography, despite its promise of immediacy, faces the same paradox: the impossibility of freezing the essence of a reality that is necessarily in flux. That's where her work feels most deeply human—in the awkwardness of an imprecise line, in its pathos and occasional scruffiness. It reveals how humanity's compulsion to impose order—its longing for structure—is inevitably at odds with the very nature of perception. As Dillon observes, the very "threat of obscurity, flaring or fading" we resist is, in fact, the core of all phenomena. Glantz seeks precisely this "harmony parallel to nature," translating "the immensity, the torrent of the world, into a thumb's worth of matter."

Through this same pursuit—through the traditional medium of paint—Glantz invites the viewer into an experience less about what is pictured than about how vision, memory, and language converge. Her paintings implicate the body itself in the act of seeing, transforming perception into cognition, and cognition into image.

In these new works, the process of image-making merges with that of meaning-making. Painting becomes both the act and the metaphor for the instability and reciprocity of perception as lived experience.

That is why the paintings placed on the altar, though formally recalling the icon, no longer need to depict divinity. The painting itself becomes a vessel of manifestation: through its material fabric and the very process of image-making it embodies, it reveals the profound mystery of creation—the genesis of all things, emerging from chaos into form. In Glantz's hands, painting aligns the mind with a wider universal consciousness, transforming the restless flow of atoms into material of contemplation.