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Zak Prekop: Mirrored Weeks at Essex Street / Maxwell Graham



Zak Prekop, *Phases*, 2020. Oil on muslin, 96 × 64 inches

In Zak Prekop's latest exhibition at Essex Street, "Mirrored Weeks" the painter brings together a suite of work whose fluid abstract forms abound in riotous colors and patterns. Sometimes referred to as "non-paintings" because of their light touch quality that shows only the traces of his hand, Prekop's work nonetheless displays a skillful handling of the medium, his practice of building depth through transparent layers apparent.

Phases (2020) [pictured] is a symphony of undulating blue forms that sweep across the canvas. Prekop had begun working on the painting years ago before returning to it and completing it in 2020. When he titled the piece, he was thinking of the division of time spent working on it, as well as the lunar cycle, which he references within the composition: Twenty-four circles, each containing a different balance of blue and white, represent various phases of the moon. Individualized by the brushstrokes that underlie them, the circles are resolved within the composition over which they hover, layers of paint coming to further obscure and define them.

"This illusion of transparency is really one layer's responsiveness to the layers and forms behind it," Prekop says in a statement on the exhibition. "I like to think of each component of my paintings as responsive to the other, so the whole thing becomes a unified organism or natural system." Such is the leitmotif of the artist's practice: a holistic end to each work, which, inscrutable at first, comes to be determined through its apparent tensions and uncertainties.