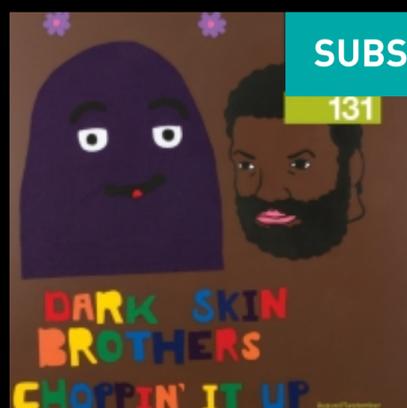


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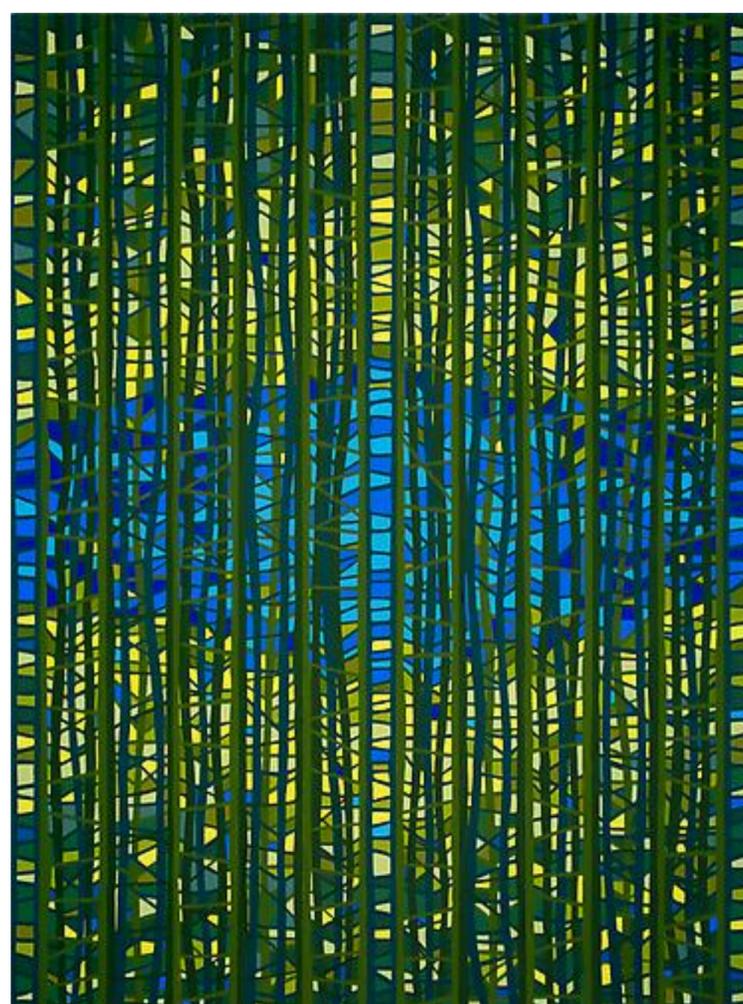


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## HOMAGE TO EXPLORATION: KATIA SANTIBAÑEZ AT MORGAN LEHMAN GALLERY

As winter segues slowly into spring in New York City, Katia Santibañez's ([NAP #104](#)) latest suite of hypnotic investigations into the natural world instill warmth into our gray worldview and chilled bodies. *Docere, Delectare, Movere*, her fourth exhibition at [Morgan Lehman Gallery](#), follows several months in Rome and a residency at the [Josef and Anni Albers Foundation](#), imbuing this series with vitality and fearlessness in contrasting colors. — *Brian Fee, Austin contributor*



Katia Santibañez | *Interlude*, 2013-14, acrylic on panel, 16 x 12", image courtesy the artist and Morgan Lehman Gallery, New York.

Santibañez's works teem with life. Within the modestly scaled *Interlude*, the irregular — or, better written, organic — verticals of a verdant canopy open up into a brilliant, oval-shaped sky. Seen another way, the blues act as a pool, partially obscured by vegetal greenery, with lozenged bits of cerulean recurring throughout like reflections on the water's surface. Its neighbor *Slowly Across* bears another primitive force: heat, its amorphous scatter of yellow and orange quadrilaterals the handiwork of either the hearth or the sun's imperfect shimmer on a rock wall. The illusion of depth created between *Slowly Across*' fiery tones and cool violet base come up in the artist's catalogue interview with Kathranne Knight. Santibañez notes, "the grid is similar to a weft, which brings me back to the work of Anni Albers...I invite the viewer to walk inside the structures, like a garden she can traverse with her mind, leaving her the choice to start where she wants."

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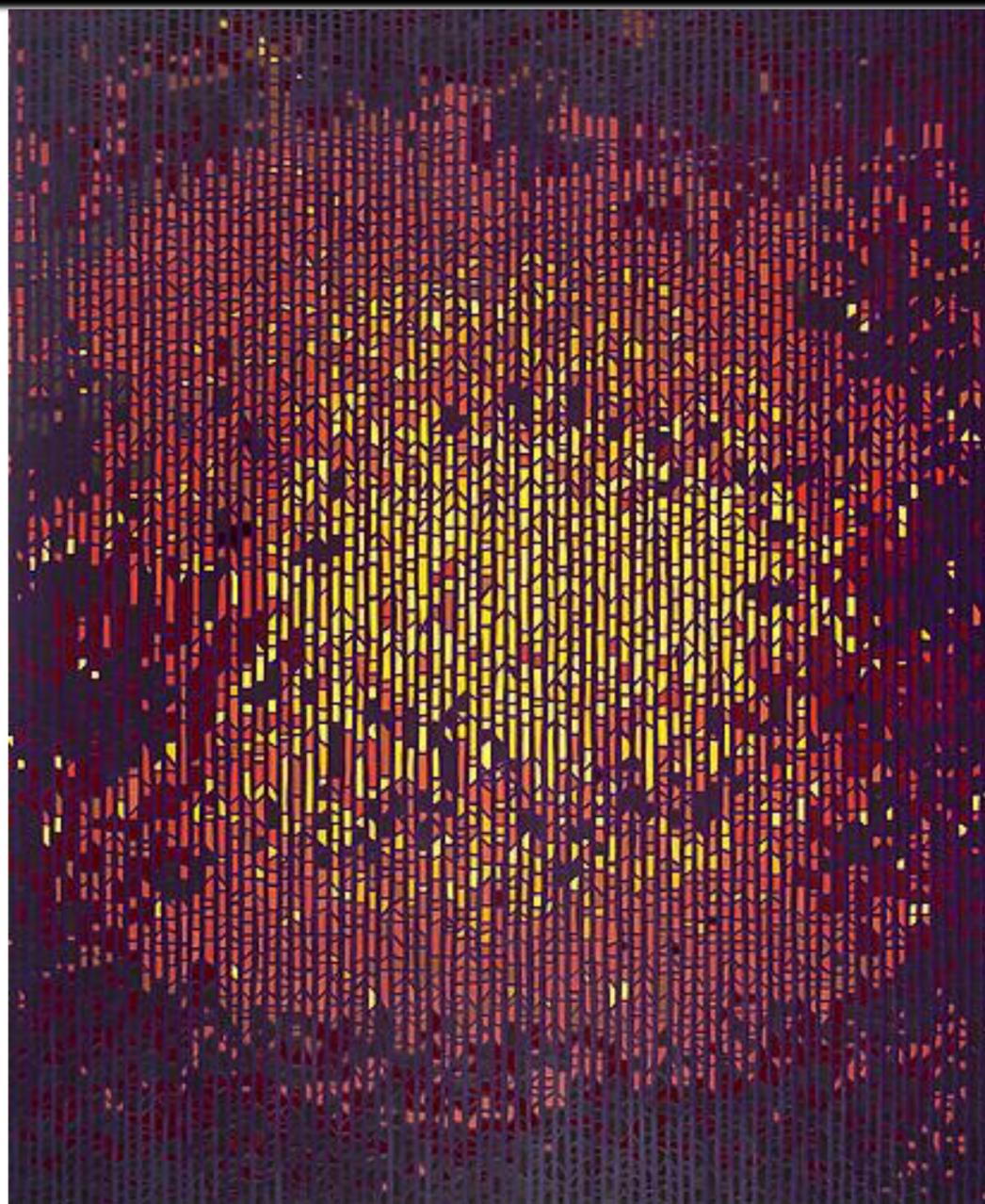
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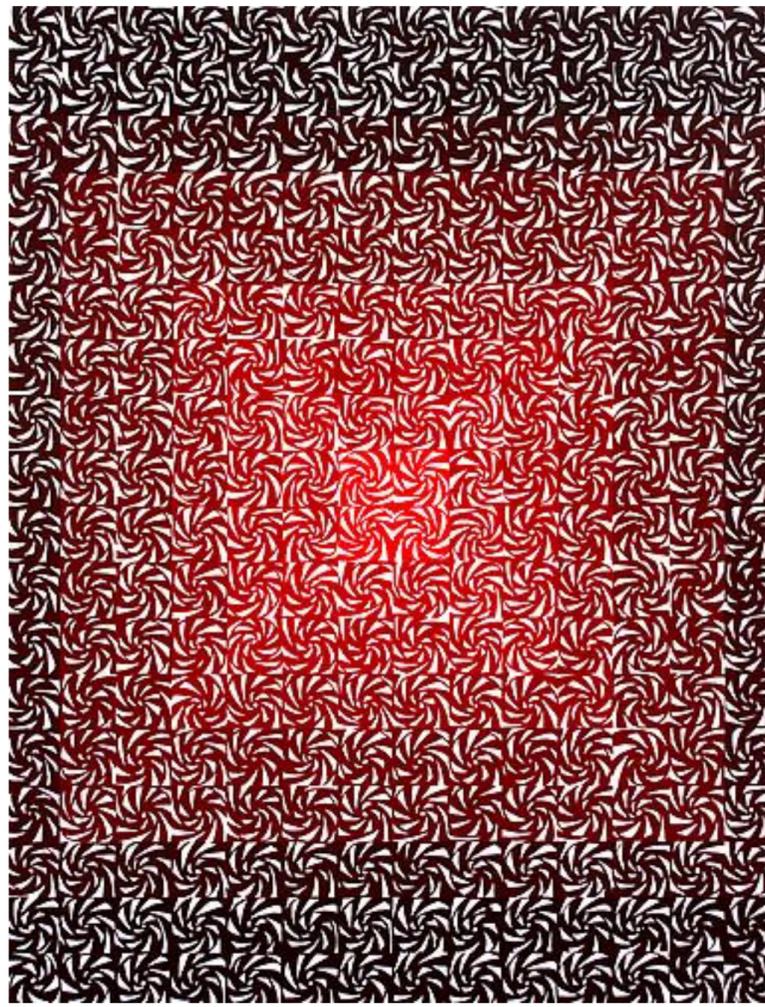
*Katia Santibañez | Slowly Across, 2013-14, acrylic on panel, 24 x 20", image courtesy the artist and Morgan Lehman Gallery, New York.*



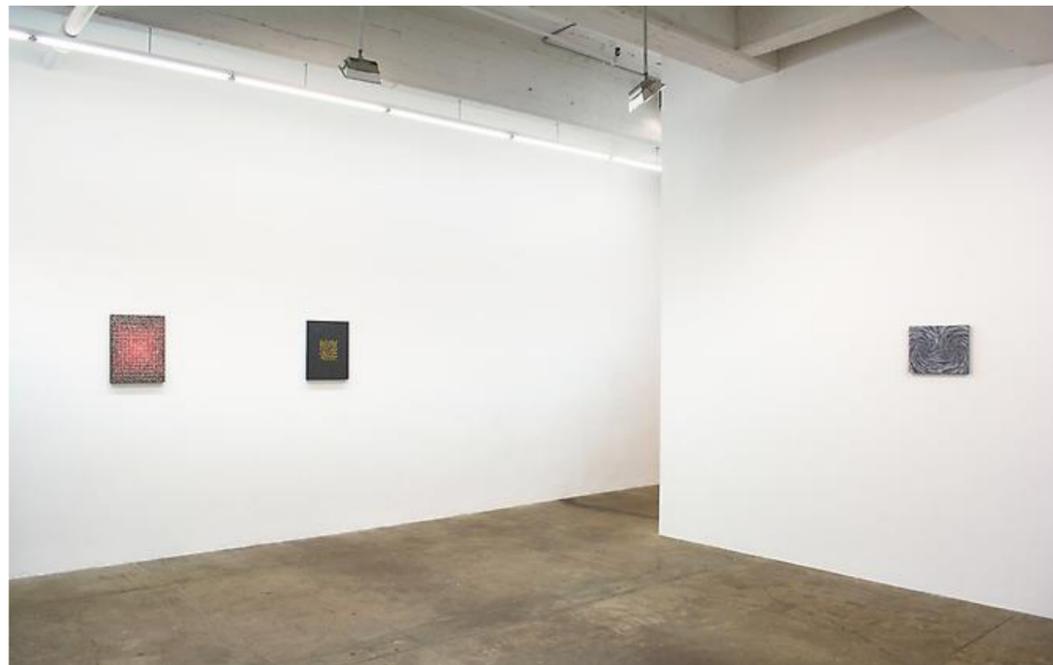
*Docere, Delectare, Movere installation view. Image courtesy the artist and Morgan Lehman Gallery, New York.*

Her paintings benefit from a lingered gaze. It's not hard to do, as I did, pondering the point of view in *Interlude* or staring into the distance of *Somewhere Above the Roman Sky* and sensing both the city's almost unreal history (centuries and centuries' worth of structure and stone) physically within oneself, along with the artist's evident inspiration from having been there. Others, like *A Melody For 9 Voices* and its intense wall-mate *Touching the Red Wind* lead the eye on a more focused path. The former forms a vortex of sea green and gray amid a pinwheel pattern of muted blue-gray (and echoing the Golden ratio present in a snail shell's spiral and so much of nature), while the latter reverberates orangey red in Santibañez's clearest homage to Josef's squares. However, as in *Slowly Across*, where the artist channels insight from Anni Albers' woven oeuvre in her acrylic pairings, Josef's influence remains fully within Santibañez's hand, as the just perceptible succession of tonal squares diffuses through a screen of white — it could be sunlight through Roman patterned glass or the curtains, but it goes back to Santibañez and her own

engagement with the world.



*Katia Santibañez | Touching the Red Wind, 2013, acrylic on panel, 18 x 14", image courtesy the artist and Morgan Lehman Gallery, New York.*

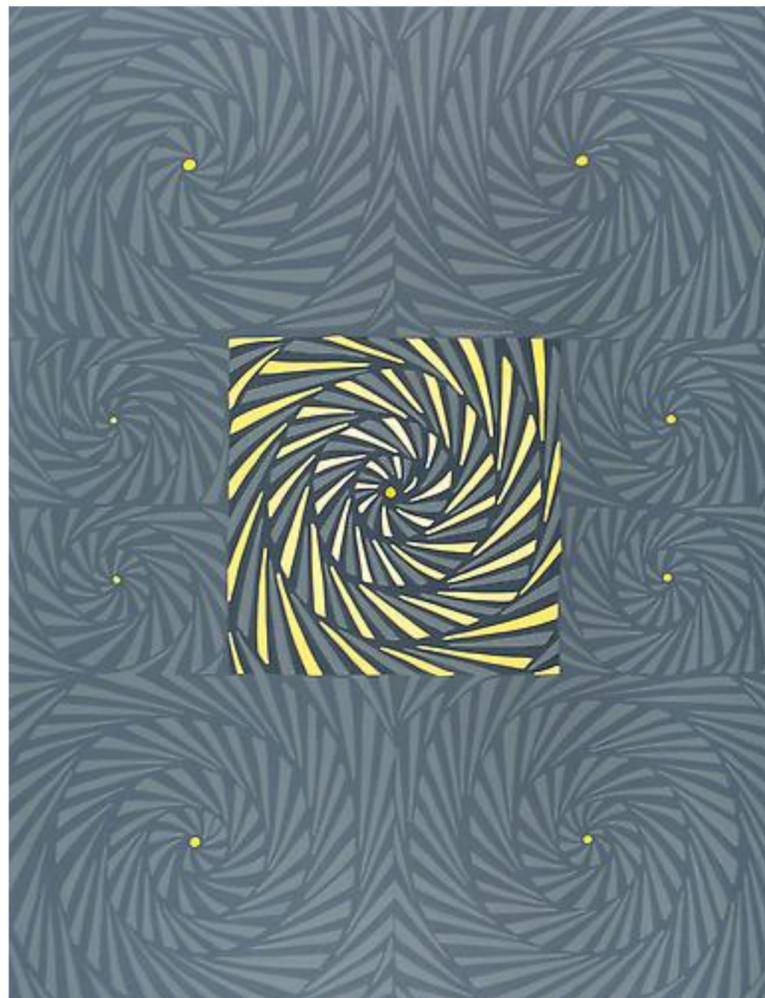


*Docere, Delectare, Movere installation view. Image courtesy the artist and Morgan Lehman Gallery, New York.*



*Katia Santibañez | Symphony IV, 2014, photo collage on board, 4 x 3".  
Image courtesy the artist and Morgan Lehman Gallery, New York.*

Five photographic collages encapsulate the experience. Santibañez hasn't shown these publicly until this exhibition, despite photographs acting as an integral part of her practice (everything from composing paintings to video work) in lieu of traditional sketches on paper. They're wonderful: within these four-inch squares or four-by-three-inch rectangles are ordered strips of sunshine bursting through branches, fern close-ups or a flotilla of clouds oriented sideways. Each is titled *Symphony* and each is just that, the mellifluous natural world itself foreshadowing and conversing with the neighboring paintings. Returning to the catalogue, Santibañez states, "the world I am creating is endless, it starts anywhere and you can go anywhere...Each square and rectangle is connected, they are creating a world, my own world. Being an artist allows me to live fully my freedom and I want to invite the viewer to feel and experience this privilege I have. You can choose a point A in the painting and go to the point B, following my path, understanding my walk and taking your own walk." A white-box lined with tiny paintings and even tinier photo-collages can delight us in doing just that.



*Katia Santibañez | A Melody For 9 Voices, 2013-14, acrylic on panel, 18 x*

14", image courtesy the artist and Morgan Lehman Gallery, New York.

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*Katia Santibañez was born in Paris, France in 1964 and received her degree in 1990 at the Ecole Supérieure des Beaux Arts in Paris. Solo exhibitions include Jancar Gallery (Los Angeles, CA), IMC Lab (New York, NY), and group shows at Pace Prints (New York, NY), and Jeff Bailey Gallery (New York, NY). Her paintings, drawings, and prints are in numerous public and private collections. Santibañez lives and works in New York City and in the Berkshires. [Docere, Delectare, Movere](#) at Morgan Lehman Gallery continues through April 12.*

*Brian Fee is an art punk based currently in Austin, TX, but he can usually be found in New York, Tokyo, or Berlin, depending on the art season.*

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