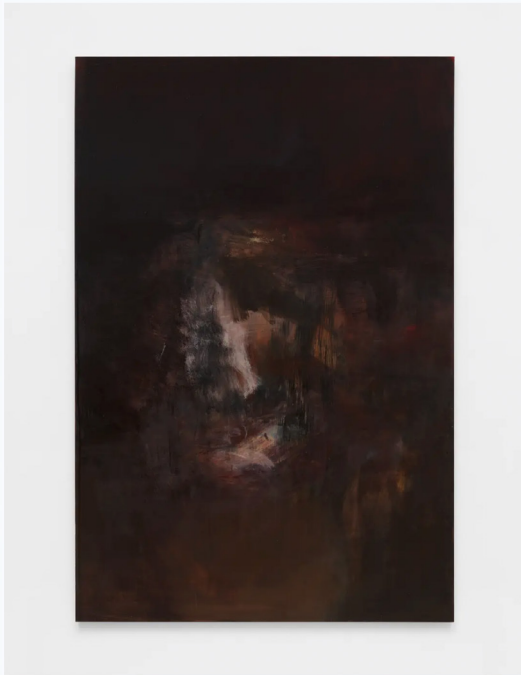


## BROOKLYN RAIL

Liza Lacroix: *our  
arrangement our  
arrangement our  
arrangement*



Liza Lacroix, *Enjoy the rest of your day*, 2024. Oil on canvas, 72 x 48 x 1 1/2 inches. Courtesy the artist and Magenta Plains.

With her newest exhibition of field paintings at Magenta Plains, Liza Lacroix focuses on a limited palette—the blacks, reds, browns, and grays of a cavernous eclipse—and achieves, with the most effective paintings on view, a palpable sense of depth. Lacroix's forms mostly remain affixed to the brush-stroke, and thus the arm, in its rise-and-fall. But nested in onyx and charcoal-black foregrounds, garnet-mulberry red dashes and cider-clay virgule gatherings allow for more depth than the artist had previously achieved, even considering the fact that her earlier works, such as those shown in the same venue in 2022, made use of a much wider color palette. Lacroix's newest works are more constrained, which licenses her to deepen the ambit of her formalist project, taking aim at the play of light and chiaroscuro as such.

Ekin Erkan

*Liza Lacroix: our arrangement our arrangement our arrangement*

The Brooklyn Rail, December, 2024.

<https://urlr.me/6Ez5XV>

All of the works in the exhibition were executed in 2024. Nine of them are oil on canvas, one is charcoal and graphite on laminated wood, and three are charcoal on Arches paper. All of Lacroix's works optically hone in on a collection of marks that identify the location where light is consolidated in the composition—although, in the case of the charcoal works, negative space takes the place of the paintings' umbrous shadows. Of the three works on paper, all *Untitled*, two collect graphite and charcoal markings along the center of the field. A related work, *Looking forward to our next meeting* is, in fact, Lacroix's kitchen table, its reflective surface recording the marks left behind from her drawing practice. It is distinguished by a lower-right nexus of scattered pencil impressions and does not betray as proportionate and symmetric a uniformity as the other graphite and charcoal works. This allows it to exhibit a kind of "uniformity amidst variety" that sweeps our gaze towards the edges, a tightening-effect that provides a pleasurable counterbalance to the centrality of the other compositions.



Liza Lacroix, *Looking forward to our next meeting*, 2024. Charcoal and graphite on laminated wood, 36 x 72 inches. Courtesy the artist and Magenta Plains.

The best works in the exhibition are those with the most surface depth, where the base expanse of Lacroix's ground veers towards the infinite pitch of midnight darkness. With *Enjoy the rest of your day* and *Untitled*, Lacroix pools light along rounded strokes directed away from the center of the canvas. Using linseed oil, she thins out these ruptures of light, bringing them out from the surrounding scarlet- and ochre-bedaubed planes. In *She enjoyed 2 deaths*, the breadth of light is dramatized by a smoothed-over haze of yellow brushstrokes. In each work from this suite, the artist synthesizes an oblique light source with surrounding darkness. She is clearly depicting light sources as they would materialize in nature, despite the fact that no trees, mountains, or plains—indeed no recognizable objects at all—appear in the paintings. This lends her work to a kind of naturalism, albeit one that does not remain affixed to the natural semblance.

Ekin Erkan

*Liza Lacroix: our arrangement our arrangement our arrangement*

The Brooklyn Rail, December, 2024.

<https://urlr.me/6Ez5XV>

Lacroix's interest in the quality of light takes its cue from developments in chiaroscuro that emerged during the end of the Quattrocento. In works like Leonardo da Vinci's *The Lady with an Ermine* (ca. 1489–1491), the interplay of light and shadow is structured according to a unified “atmospheric” system, rather than keyed to the form of individual objects. While, in Lacroix's work, illumination is detached from identifiable objects, its touch is, just as in Leonardo's painting, common and consistent. Like Leonardo, Michelangelo, Signorelli, and other Florentine artists, Lacroix—particularly in works like *I am talking about both AND the viewers*—makes use of the naturalistic, blanketing action of light. This effect is absent, however, in the metallic amaranthine-haze of *Untitled* and *When I read the titles, I thought Oh God.*, where Lacroix's light source remains occluded, barring the brushstroke forms from coalescing into a unified pictorial field. This depreciates the possibility of the aforementioned optical “tightening-effect.” Elsewhere, however, Lacroix's rendering of lighting sources projects naturalism to the foreground—one anchored in the suggestion of dimensionality and the possibility of landscapes—that renders her umbrous paintings particularly effective.



Liza Lacroix, *When I read the titles, I thought Oh God.*, 2024. Oil on canvas, 48 x 60 x 1 1/2 inches. Courtesy the artist and Magenta Plains.

This aspect of Lacroix's work recalls Immanuel Kant's notorious observation in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, that “Nature was beautiful, if at the same time it looked like art; and art can only be called beautiful if we are aware that it is art and yet it looks to us like nature.” According to Kant, although artworks should express aesthetic ideas and not empirical concepts, they ought not remain altogether separated from the “look” of nature.

Kant's immediate antecedents like Charles Batteux developed the precedents for this idea, arguing that there must be a quality in the beautiful artwork that is natural, or mimetic, rather than contrived. In treating abstract strokes as a precipice for the play of light, Lacroix's use of naturalistic illumination demonstrates a clever way of retaining naturalism without relying on nature as empirically observed. Of course, this is certainly not what a writer like Batteux had in mind—in his *The Fine Arts Reduced to a Single Principle* (1746), Batteux argues that “painting imitates *belle nature* by means of colours” and that naturalistic “imitation is always the source of pleasure.” However, in the wake of modernism's jettisoning verisimilitude, the artist who is attendant to naturalism must pursue strategies that do not simply look backwards, towards academicism or landscape painting. Indeed, Lacroix's illuminated, cavernous works show that one can express *belle nature*, or art that “looks to us like nature,” without the presence of apparently empirical objects.

Ekin Erkan

*Liza Lacroix: our arrangement our arrangement our arrangement*

The Brooklyn Rail, December, 2024.

<https://urlr.me/6Ez5XV>



**The New York Times**

## What to See in N.Y.C. Galleries in December

**Liza Lacroix**



Liza Lacroix, "She enjoyed 2 deaths," 2024, oil on canvas.  
via Liza Lacroix and Magenta Plains

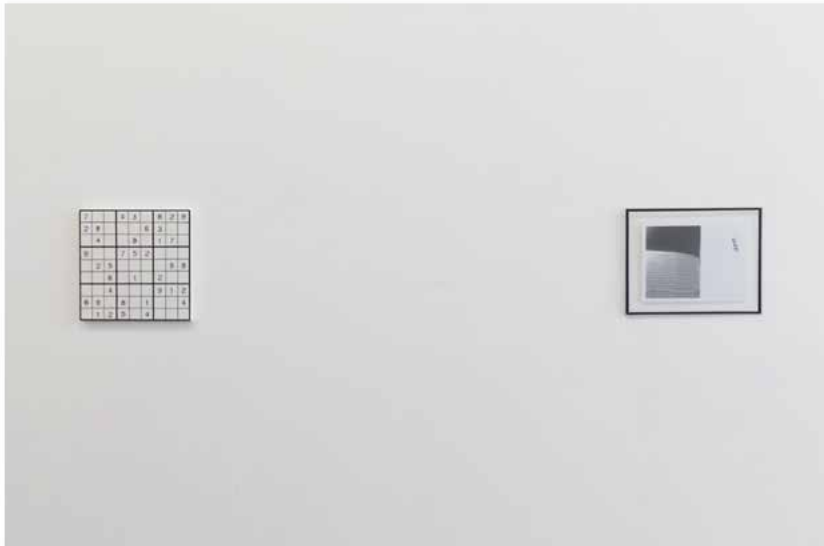
Heavy weather settles over Liza Lacroix's new paintings, nine atmospheric oil abstracts on canvas in a moody palette of oxidized rust and charred browns. They suggest less meteorological event, though, than psychic landscapes, smokily diffuse and liable to shift without warning. Sulfuric blooms of vermillion emerge and are overwhelmed. Drips, bumps, and brush hair interrupt the plane. Smooth, dry-brushed passages knock into shiny wet.

They're not jubilant, but there is an ecstasy to be found in catharsis. A bright break encroaching from an upper corner in "She enjoyed 2 deaths" (2024) counts as sunny — what Emily Dickinson called the "certain Slant of light" of winter afternoons "that oppresses." The paintings recall J.M.W. Turner's disaster scenes, though wiped of their foregrounds. Lacroix shares Turner's knack for molding sturm und drang into something both beautiful and unnerving, like an aura reading or an oil spill.

Lacroix has a lot of ideas that paint alone cannot satisfy, and her attention shifts between image and installation. An original soundtrack created with the sound artist Reece Cox, alternating between ambient plonking and muffled conversation, haunts the gallery's three levels, amplifying the paintings' split consciousness.

On the top floor, Lacroix punctures the gloss of the gallery's daily operations, throwing open all of the cabinets in its staff kitchen, revealing the employees' drinkware and snack preferences. The intervention lands somewhere between the subtle alterations of Michael Asher and the bodily vulnerability of Robert Gober. In the spirit of mutually assured destruction, or exposure therapy, one of Lacroix's Celine pumps sits forlorn in the top rack of the kitchen's dishwasher.

## Liza Lacroix and Reece Cox Puzzle Over Transmediality at Midnight Projects



Reece Cox (L) and Liza Lacroix (R) feat. Lode, "a laughing stock or a shocking study of sexual obsession (The medium and the light, Marshall McLuhan)," work on paper, 2021. Photograph courtesy Midnight Projects.

For over a decade, the painter Liza Lacroix and sound artist Reece Cox have been friends, mostly they discuss their studio practice – finding common ground across mediums, but they also share and exchange life events. The itinerant space Midnight Projects second show, "Has This Solved Your Problem of What To Do Next?" presents paintings by both artists, a work from Lacroix's new series based on reworked photocopies of academic text excerpts, and a sound work by Cox. Marked by the pandemic and a balancing act between penetrating legacy and carrying out artistic revolution, the exhibition grapples with *techné*. Igniting discussion of how sensations and experiences can be communicated across mediums it is a timely deconstruction of some of the fragments that fit into the passages of time.

During the pandemic, we have experienced a slow-down in time and, on a global scale, mental health has taken a toll. Daily the New York Times posts a set of three different – easy, medium, and hard – Sudoku puzzles. In the exhibition Cox presents three paintings of the popular Japanese puzzles published in the NYT March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020 issue. The date marks the day that the World Health Organization announced COVID-19 a global pandemic. As the virus continues to ravage civilizations, we have all, in our own ways, tried to make sense of the senseless; processing large amounts of conflicting information from the news cycle. Cox piece speaks to the ease in which many of us categorize our days: easy, medium, and hard. Increasingly, for some, becoming harder and harder. The paintings evoke that daunting feeling that we all have; that life is a puzzle too difficult to solve – a feeling that might dissipate as you solve the Sudokus in the gallery space.

The two artists have been impacted by the pandemic differently, Cox a performing sound artist whose practice is tethered to live performances fueled by tightly packed dancing bodies has changed drastically. Although he has continued to play music live on radio shows and share recordings online he has not been able to play at his regular venues. We have heard our cities change, some sounds disappearing – cars and the late-night dissonance of party-goers, while others, like birdsong, or for those living closer to hospitals, sirens, have become more prominent. In his sound piece “365 Days” Cox examines the sounds he would have played for others if the world were open, snippets of electronic music and sound ebb and flow to the RPM of a heartbeat. Crisp and methodological Cox’s two works represent neatly compartmentalized the experience of collective loss that, albeit at times narrowly, fit within the linearity of time.



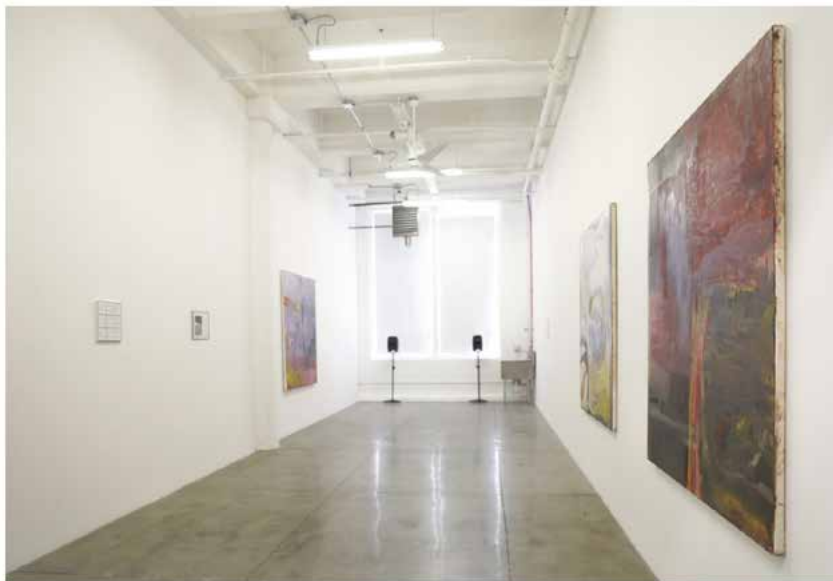
Liza Lacroix, “Man One, Man Two.” (Left), and “Soak,” (Right). Oil on canvas. 2021. Photograph courtesy of Midnight Projects.

Lacroix’s work is more energetic, erratic, and humorous, counterbalancing Cox attempts toward structuring, her works instead break boundaries, confuse, and skillfully places the viewer in moments where feelings might conflict. Lacroix works with transferring parts of her emotional life, and fragments of art history onto canvas. The large-scale oil on canvas pictures are both awkward and magnetizing with their odd color pairings and bold use of the picture plane. Art with wit is refreshing in these challenging times. Like jumbled and disorderly musical notes, she uses signifiers – colors, shapes – to create abstract works in which some parts or moments on the canvas bear resemblance to something recognizable, but are hard to pinpoint. The artist cites Cy Twombly, George Baselitz, and Lutz Bacher as a source of inspiration for this series. Lacroix’s works were born based on a deep-seated knowledge of the history of painting and conflicting acts of reliance, disregard, and revolt to it.

Through small gestures Lacroix experiments by veering off track from what is traditionally expected from the medium of painting; evoking the human body and its fluids, movement, and sensations of pleasure and pain.



An annotated quote by the Canadian philosopher and avant-gardist media theorist Marshall McLuhan further drives home the exhibitions multi- and transmedial angle; “a laughing stock or a shocking study of sexual obsession (The medium and the light, Marshall McLuhan)” is based on a picture sent over text message to Lacroix from Canadian artist Alli Melanson. Together the artists have an attribution system: Lode. As a feminist act of referencing they add ‘Lode’ to a works’ title when it incorporates an idea or element shared or originated by the other. Nodding to Jean-Michel Basquiat and Jennifer Stein’s first Xerox series, that unmasks certain colonizing aspects of art historical discourse, Lacroix side-steps or alludes to exploitation by muscularly inserting herself into the McLuhan’s writing by reworking the printed page: photographing, photocopying, enlarging, and annotating – a quote has been circled and the word “whore” is scribbled.



Installation view. Photograph courtesy of Midnight Projects.

McLuhan coined the term “the medium is the message” in 1964. “It is only too typical that the ‘content’ of any medium blinds us to the character of the medium,” he wrote in “Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man” which investigated how communications media shaped social change. Overall, the cacophony of mediums that with careful intention are presented in the exhibition and multiple references, mainly in Lacroix’s titles, to the body speak to the ‘sensory turn’ in art history, shepherding the audience to not only pay attention to the visual but also beyond it, to the auditory and sensory experience of the exhibition.

## ARTFORUM

### Brian Dario, Liza Lacroix, and Vladislav Markov



Vladislav Markov, *xC*, 2017, tar and gasoline on vintage toilet paper, dimensions variable.

The palette of this three-person show was dominated by brown hues: in the crude-oil-like sheen of paintings by Liza Lacroix, the grimy residues of sweaty hands and raw materials in sculptures by Brian Dario, and the delicate gradations of burnt umber to dark tan in an installation by Vladislav Markov. Materially, each work was in some way stained. The protective panels of suede in Dario's *Foam*, 2018—a foot-and-a-half-high stack of eighteen single, used work gloves—looked rough, teased into a texture resembling sandpaper. Markov's long sheets of old toilet paper, *xC*, 2017, which had been soaked in tar and gasoline, hung like a row of worn coats along one wall of the gallery. Though durable enough to withstand the artist's process, the tissue was torn and puckered. Within this context, Lacroix's works—*Untitled*, 2017, and *Untitled*, 2018—also seemed to be less “paintings” in the traditional sense than modifications of canvas as a textile. On the larger piece from 2017, thin brushstrokes and fingerprints feathered a border around the central block of a uniform, leathery color, which could have been some other viscous material.

The press release for the show declined to describe or analyze the art on view. In terms of their forms and properties, the works seemed to function as meditations on time—time as labor, or aggregation as a marker of time. Even Dario's gloves, with the thicker fingers aligned so that the overall form created an upward-reaching gesture, felt like a stop-motion animation of a hand being slowly raised. The palpability of time could be considered a result of most of the works looking used—as though they had already lived a life outside the studio and gallery—thereby emphasizing both the *taking* and the *doing* in Jasper Johns's famous instructions to "Take an object / Do something to it / Do something else to it. [Repeat.]" Here one returns to the concept of labor, thinking now of whose labor is framed and what that labor entails. If Dario's *Foam* brings to mind blue-collar workers welding and perspiring in the warehouse, or even fabricators making art, his *Untitled*, 2018, shifts the focus to more minimal gestures. This small sculpture is merely a white handle grip, dingy from human contact, taken from the artist's bike. It was pulled off the handlebar in such a way that it folded in on itself, and thus appears vaguely sexual. Markov's *xC* similarly complicates such questions of labor. As vintage material, the toilet paper—mass-produced, originating in a factory—had already been marked by age, but not by use. Its beige tone may have resulted from a long wait in a supply closet, or from Markov's procedure. Within this formal dialogue, it is tempting to again break down Lacroix's paintings, to discuss them as if they are sculptures, the canvas another readymade sullied by fingertips, scuffs, dust, and paint until it was finally relieved of its banality and hung in the gallery.

But to focus on processes and histories is to neglect something important about the way these objects sat with each other in space. *xC* fluttered and breathed, sighing at its more solid, painterly cousin, Lacroix's 2017 canvas, across the room. *Foam* reached out, offering an invitation to touch, hinting at the tactility of its neighbors. Dario's bike grip sculpture was more hesitant to reveal itself, fitted carefully over a metal rod protruding from the far wall of the gallery. While searching for the work or coming upon it by chance, one was made more aware of the rawness of the exhibition space: its beams and rafters and plastic-covered pipes could also be works. The *Untitled* paintings looked on stoically, absorbing and refracting light in intermittent whispers.



## INFO Unltd with Liza Lacroix

12 November 2018

Arts & Culture / Avant-Garde / Interview / Talk Show / Informative

► [PLAY EPISODE](#)

On the premiere Info Unltd, we sat down with Liza Lacroix to discuss her practice as an abstract painter, her publication NUT, and the recent developments in her career.

<https://lizalacroix.com/>

<https://www.artforum.com/print/reviews/201809/brian-dario-liza-lacroix-and-vladislav-markov-77374>

<https://www.anteism.com/shop/nut>

<https://www.anteism.com/shop/nut-ii>

**"AT THE END OF THE DAY YOU  
REALLY JUST WANT TO GO  
LOOK AT PAINTINGS."**



**LIZA LACROIX**  
WITH REECE COX