

Jeppesen, Travis, "Lesley Vance," *Artforum.com*, Critics' Picks, July 14, 2016

ARTFORUM

Lesley Vance

MEYER RIEGGER | BERLIN

Friedrichstrasse 235

June 30–July 30

To judge by size alone, you'd think these watercolors on paper were what is often described as modest, but they're actually not. Gesture plays too great a role; instead, there is a dazzling viscosity—a sexiness, even. In one blue-and-yellow piece (all works untitled and 2016), the yellow is deployed sparingly, articulating petal and stem shapes against the blue background. The bumblebee shade stays true to the liquid nature of the medium, congealing and swimming in the center of the composition, while the cerulean that allows it to flourish has been disciplined into strict swaths.

In other paintings, it is the line that dominates the plane—one motif is a series of thin black snakes calligraphically moving through the scene, with a wildness, speed, and recklessness. It's all abstract, but, as in the best abstractions, it is fun to tease out shapes that replicate the real world, such as a tangle of bloodred branches seeming to emerge from a mass of indiscernible green foliage. These works will certainly be recognizable to fans of Lesley Vance's oil paintings, though perhaps here the concerns are just as plastic as they are floral. They are contained by the glass and the frame, maybe, but they are also limitless in their vine-like grabbing toward implications unknown.



Lesley Vance, untitled, 2016, watercolor on paper, 16 x 13 x 1".

— Travis Jeppesen