

## Linda Stojak

It's ok to do nothing

April 2 - May 7, 2022

Opening Reception: Saturday April 2, 2-6pm

Lowell Ryan Projects is pleased to present a solo exhibition of new works by Philadelphia-based artist Linda Stojak titled *It's ok to do nothing*. The exhibition consists of a series of paintings of solitary female figures that exist in an ambiguous space between identity and anonymity. While personal in nature, these works allow for a range of interpretation and emotional response. This is Stojak's first exhibition in Los Angeles and with the gallery.

Stojak's works conjure a feeling of remembrance and the uncertainty that can come when time has passed—layers of memory that shift with a perspective that only age and time can bring. The paintings in the exhibition are enigmatic renderings of women, lushly executed and textured by the build up of paint—methodical applications with the palette knife, layers of washes, and considered brushstrokes. A kind of burnishing effect emerges that creates a luminous glow in the surfaces. Each painting provides a journey for the viewer, but within the realm of this expressionist figurative painter there is also the emergence of a portrait—unfinished, evolving and transforming. Stojak's figures are often incomplete in nature. The eyes, or often the whole face, smudged or blurred creating a feeling of recalling the memory of a loved one, while the shape of the hair, the color of lipstick or gesture of the body remain—a floating image or “stillness” as Stojak says. “These paintings deal with moments in time where you cannot move forward and you cannot move backward.” The figures read less as individuals, but instead as timeless memories that hover on the canvas like ghosts.

As Stojak discusses, “I scrape and scar the canvas not in order for it to look a particular way, but in order to work through the ideas. I change the image, the color...anything that is keeping me from finding something that is of personal importance in the work. This inadvertently leads to this layering of paint. I can paint with intensity, but then need to calm it all down...calm all that anxiety down. For example, there are many drips in the paintings, which I let happen while I paint, but then I go back and control them. I make specific decisions about which stay and which should be painted over so I control the emotion in the work. I think these are emotional paintings, but I need to be concise.”

With a successful career spanning more than three decades, Linda Stojak paints solitary figures captured in their pictorial plane, obsessively worked and reworked until the paint itself becomes at one with a search for meaning. The technique is both thoughtful and gestural. In Stojak's paintings, the expressionistic is played against the conceptual reflecting a synthesis of emotions, fears, conflicts, doubts, and experiences that comprise the human condition. Linda Stojak has been awarded a Guggenheim fellowship, a Leeway Grant, a Distinguished Achievement Award from Arcadia University, and a residency in Toblach, Italy. Her work has been reviewed and discussed in numerous publications including *The New York Times*, *Artforum*, *Riot Material*, *Art in America* and *ARTnews*. Her work is represented in over 300 private collections as well as in public collections such as The University of Pennsylvania, Brown University, Seattle University, and The Harn Museum of Art. Linda Stojak (b. 1955) received her Masters in Fine Art from Pratt Institute and lives and works in Philadelphia, PA.