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Art Insider: Tire tread expresses the complexity of the human experience

By Lindsay Preston Zappas | September 22, 2020

Linda Stark at David Kordansky



Linda Stark, "Cyclops Fountain" 2020, detail. Oil on linen over panel, 20.5 x 20.5 x 2.5 inches. Image courtesy of the artist and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles. Photo by Lee Thompson.

I've always responded to the slow wit of Linda Stark's textural paintings. At first glance, some of the work might read as cheeky pop, like the cartoon Minion eye in "Cyclops Fountain" (2020) that dramatically sobs rivers of silvery-blue tears. Yet, Stark's work builds emotionally, conceptually, and literally.

To create the paintings, the artist painstakingly builds up layers and layers of oil paint (some of the modestly-sized works take her years to produce), molding each layer carefully to create her textured effects. With each layer of paint, the sincerity of the work seems to build. Each work becomes a labored treasure that the artist is deeply connected to.

For her new exhibition "Hearts," Stark iterates on the theme of Purple Hearts, bleeding hearts, and heart-shaped candy boxes. "Sacred Heart" (2020) pictures the Catholic devotional symbol radiating with gold. Yet the center of the heart contains an outline of delicately rendered ovaries. A feminist message undergirds much of Stark's work, and here, the artist commandeers a religious symbol that might stand in for the repression of women's bodies, and transforms it into a celebratory ode to the female form.