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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN: LOUISE FISHMAN

by Hilton Als

At eighty-one, Fishman is painting with a vigor and discipline that might inspire envy in younger artists were it not for the love and light in her work—the product of her generous hand and eye. Fishman’s tremendously energetic new two-part exhibition at Karma conveys perseverance, and what life has to offer, if you remain open to it. Coming of age at the tail end of Abstract Expressionism, the painter went through a number of styles (some of her early works employed language) before distilling her influences, from Agnes Martin and Joan Mitchell to feminist politics, into a potent vocabulary that plays with space in a sometimes languid, sometimes jarring, but always graceful way. The brushstrokes in the striking vertical “Mondrian’s Grave” (2018) are layered and dense, yet somehow airy, bringing to mind not only Mondrian’s squares but also the pleasures of influence and inspiration.