



Sylvia Plimack Mangold

April 14 – June 3, 2023



Left to right: Sylvia Plimack Mangold, *Leaves in the Wind*, 2019 © Sylvia Plimack Mangold; Sylvia Plimack Mangold, *Winter Maple*, 2023 © Sylvia Plimack Mangold

New York, NY – March 24, 2023 – 125 Newbury proudly presents *Sylvia Plimack Mangold*, the first solo exhibition of new work by this pioneering figure in the history of post-1960s art since 2018. The exhibition debuts a suite of fifteen paintings and works on paper that Mangold has created over the past five years, all of which depict the maple tree outside the window of her studio in upstate New York. The exhibition, which will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue with a new essay by John Yau and an interview with the artist, opens to the public on April 14th and runs through June 3rd. A public reception will take place on Thursday, April 13th from 6pm to 8pm.

For more than four decades, Sylvia Plimack Mangold has been painting the trees that surround her home and studio in Washingtonville, New York. Known since the 1960s for developing a singular visual language rooted in figuration, Mangold’s paintings boil down nature to its purest ether. For over a decade, the large maple tree growing directly outside her studio window has provided Mangold with her exclusive subject. Describing the visual splendors of the tree as it changes over the course of days, weeks, months, and seasons, Mangold’s paintings are portraits of time’s passage. Her winter paintings reveal the complex latticework of the tree’s denuded branches against a bleached blue sky; while the summer and autumn paintings are dense vignettes of foliage rustled by the wind, rendered in virtuosic passages of color and brushwork that teem with restless movement.

In his essay for the exhibition catalogue, John Yau describes Mangold as “preternaturally sensitive to the nuanced relationship” between painting and subject. “By cropping her views so that viewers do not see the entire tree or by zeroing in on a grouping of leaves,” writes Yau, “Mangold counterbalances the image of the artist as omnipotent author. We can know only part of the world and we can only see it incompletely.” In this sense, Mangold’s subject is the act of perception. Her paintings investigate how we see, and the nature of sight and subjectivity itself.



Mangold's unflagging dedication to an incredibly focused body of imagery over such a long period of time—coupled with her ability to create an atmosphere of almost ontological contemplation—recalls artistic forbears Paul Cézanne and Giorgio Morandi. A single painting can take the artist over a year to complete, as she returns each day to find the tree slightly changed: its leaves blown in a different directions, or beginning to change color or fall; its branches having grown slightly, their tips beginning to bud in spring, or the color of the bark changing as the temperatures drops in winter.

Mangold's paintings stage an uncanny intimacy between viewer and tree. "Sylvia assembles her trees with an extraordinary inventory of marks achieved through a lifetime of experimentation," writes 125 Newbury director and Pace Gallery founder Arne Glimcher in his introduction to the catalogue, "She has painted the same tree for decades, but the subject of her paintings is not the tree. The subject is the process of painting. Neither abstract nor figurative, her *Leaves in the Wind* are as concrete as the stripes of Agnes Martin. ... For all their intense observation and painterly activity, her paintings remain radically quiet pictures."

In 1960s and 1970s, Mangold began making meticulously rendered images of inlaid wooden floors, observing with dazzling verisimilitude the grain of the wood and the effects of sunlight falling on its surface. Her paintings of floors led to images depicting the tools of her craft—rulers and tape—which dealt with reflection, transparency, and the powers of painting to transcend representation. In 1971, Mangold moved upstate, and in the ensuing decade she turned toward the landscape as a subject. During this time, her paintings became increasingly concerned with trees. In the 1990s, she began to focus on two trees in particular: a pin oak that grows next to her pond on one end of her property, and a maple tree that looms up directly outside her home and studio.

In her *Leaves in the Wind* series and her images of the leafless winter maple, time remains the central subject of Mangold's work. Her trees are like visual and sensory clocks: they capture the feeling, texture, and sensuousness of nature as a force of constant and unceasing change. As rejoinder and antidote to the primacy of photography in our contemporary world, Mangold's paintings offer new ways of experiencing time's passage through stillness. Mangold thinks of her works not merely as *depictions* of trees and tree-ness; instead, while she paints, she "builds" the tree limb by limb, a process whose slowness allies it with the pace of a tree's growth. The timescale of the painting and the tree's own rhythms are brought into harmonious alignment, so that each brushstroke feels as if it is taking shape at the pace of the tree itself.

"The act of choosing a single tree and painting it again and again is a profoundly Zen-like activity," writes Glimcher in the exhibition catalogue, "It evokes the way a monk might paint a single calligraphic form for their entire life. Or rake a garden of sand. There's something bordering on the spiritual about such sustained dedication to a single activity." The artist herself has acknowledged the meditative quality of her process. For her, the act of painting has an almost palliative power: it is an opportunity not only to revel in the visual splendor of the everyday, but to seek out and discover the plenitude of joy that resides in the act of making.



ABOUT 125 NEWBURY

125 Newbury is a project space in New York City helmed by Arne Glimcher, Founder and Chairman of Pace Gallery. Named for the original location of Pace, which Glimcher opened at 125 Newbury Street in Boston in 1960, the venture is located at 395 Broadway in Manhattan's Tribeca neighborhood, at the corner of Walker Street. Occupying a 3,900-square-foot ground-floor space in a landmark building with 17-foot ceilings, the interior of 125 Newbury has been fully renovated by Enrico Bonetti and Dominic Kozerski of Bonetti/Kozerski Architecture.

Guided by Glimcher's six decades of pioneering exhibition-making and steadfast commitment to close collaboration with artists, 125 Newbury presents up to five exhibitions per year, with a focus on both thematic group shows as well as solo exhibitions by emerging, established, and historical artists. The 125 Newbury team is led by directors Arne Glimcher, Kathleen McDonnell, Talia Rosen, and Oliver Shultz, who work together to develop cutting-edge and thought-provoking exhibitions that reflect a global, cross-generational perspective.

Press Inquiries:

Claire Hurley / Emily Kopp

press@125newbury.com

+1 703 901 1960 / +1 516 426 4146

@Follow125Newbury @125newbury