

## Loie Hollowell: The Third Stage

6 September – 28 October 2023  
 Quai des Bergues, 15-17  
 Geneva

Cocktail Reception: Tuesday 12 September, Geneva Art Week, 6-8pm



Loie Hollowell, *Split Orbs in purple, pink, green and teal*, 2023  
 oil paint, acrylic medium, and high-density foam on linen over Dibond panel, 121.9 × 91.4 × 9.5 cm © Loie Hollowell

Geneva—Pace Gallery is delighted to announce *The Third Stage*, a solo exhibition of new work by American painter, Loie Hollowell. Marking the artist’s first exhibition in Switzerland, Hollowell will present a suite of paintings from her Split Orb series. Titled after the last phase of labour, this show is the final instalment in a three-part series that began in spring 2021. Following her solo exhibition at the Long Museum West Bund, Shanghai (2021), this exhibition comes at a pivotal moment in Hollowell’s career as she prepares for her first museum survey at The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, opening January 2024.

Hollowell’s biomorphic abstract work explores themes of sex, pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, and motherhood. Her idiosyncratic Split Orb series bridges abstraction and self-portraiture, using striking, geometric compositions to vividly capture the female body and its transformations during childbirth. Hollowell’s velvet-textured application of paint, alternating between soft colours and hard-edged forms, creates a pulsating effect, as if the otherworldly orbs are radiating light across the canvas. She incorporates protruding, spherical forms onto the paintings’ surface, which are then bifurcated in a visceral depiction of childbirth. The two orbs, one above the other, represent the head and brain, and the pregnant stomach and cervix. In this way, her work gives form to the all-consuming process of labour, mimicking the rhythm of contractions as the orbs split open at varying intervals of degrees to represent the centimetres of dilation.

Since the birth of her own children in 2018 and 2020, Hollowell’s work has become increasingly self-referential; she abstractly dissects the female body, enraptured by its capacity to grow life, to split open and rebuild in the wake of such change. Incorporating sculptural elements that protrude from the canvas, Hollowell’s paintings recall the swell of a pregnant body. Indeed, the scale of the paintings align to the scale of the viewers’ body as viewers are invited to physically move around the works in order to discern their three-dimensionality.

Concluding a trio of exhibitions highlighting Hollowell's distinctive Split Orbs, *The Third Stage* follows *Sacred Contract* in 2021 and *Contractions* in 2022. This final presentation meditates on the period of time between the baby's arrival and the delivery of the placenta, when mother and baby become two separate beings. These works have been made not only in the wake of Hollowell's own journey into motherhood, but also amidst the increasingly restrictive laws on reproductive healthcare following the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in the US. In this context, these paintings can be understood as both personal reflections on the artist's own emotional and bodily experience, as well as broader, universal evocations of the often stigmatised and suppressed reality of giving birth.

This latest exhibition comes after Hollowell's first-ever NFT project, also titled *Contractions*, which launched in October 2022. The series comprised 280 unique, generative NFTs made with Pace Verso—the gallery's web3 hub—and Art Blocks, with 25 percent of net proceeds from the sales donated to Midwest Access Coalition and ARC-Southeast, two organisations that provide funding and logistical support to individuals seeking reproductive care, including abortion services. The project allowed for Hollowell to further explore her colour palette, presenting new ways for the artist to delve deeper into this series in the digital realm. Each of the six new paintings in *The Third Stage* are inspired by one of the NFTs originally minted in the *Contractions* project.

**Loie Hollowell** (b. 1983, Woodland, California) is recognized for her paintings that evoke bodily landscapes, using geometric shapes to move a figure or its actions into abstraction. Her work explores themes of sexuality, often through allusions to the human form with an emphasis on women's bodies. An investigation of autobiography became evident in Hollowell's early work, which explored the use of gradient staining techniques on cotton supports as a metaphor for intimate spaces—meditations on sleep and bodily fluids. These canvases evolved into figurative painting, introducing female nudes as subject matter as well as the use of reflection and mirroring. Her subsequent work exhibited a shift toward abstraction, characterized by radiating silhouettes and a pulsating color palette. With its strong colors, varied textures, and geometrical symmetry, Hollowell's practice is situated in lineage with the work of the Transcendental Painting Group (1938–41), Georgia O'Keeffe, Gulam Rasool Santosh, and Judy Chicago.

**Pace** is a leading international art gallery representing some of the most influential contemporary artists and estates from the past century, holding decades-long relationships with Alexander Calder, Jean Dubuffet, Barbara Hepworth, Agnes Martin, Louise Nevelson, and Mark Rothko. Pace enjoys a unique U.S. heritage spanning East and West coasts through its early support of artists central to the Abstract Expressionist and Light and Space movements.

Since its founding by Arne Glimcher in 1960, Pace has developed a distinguished legacy as an artist-first gallery that mounts seminal historical and contemporary exhibitions. Under the current leadership of CEO Marc Glimcher, Pace continues to support its artists and share their visionary work with audiences worldwide by remaining at the forefront of innovation. Now in its seventh decade, the gallery advances its mission through a robust global program—comprising exhibitions, artist projects, public installations, institutional collaborations, performances, and interdisciplinary projects. Pace has a legacy in art bookmaking and has published over five hundred titles in close collaboration with artists, with a focus on original scholarship and on introducing new voices to the art historical canon.

Today, Pace has eight locations worldwide, including a European foothold in London and Geneva as well as Berlin, where the gallery established an office in 2023. Pace maintains two galleries in New York—its headquarters at 540 West 25th Street, which welcomed almost 120,000 visitors and programmed 20 shows in its first six months, and an adjacent 8,000 sq. ft. exhibition space at 510 West 25th Street. Pace's long and pioneering history in California includes a gallery in Palo Alto, which was open from 2016 to 2022. Pace's engagement with Silicon Valley's technology industry has had a lasting impact on the gallery at a global level, accelerating its initiatives connecting art and technology as well as its work with experiential artists. Pace consolidated its West Coast activity through its flagship in Los Angeles, which opened in 2022. Pace was one of the first international galleries to establish outposts in Asia, where it operates permanent gallery spaces in Hong Kong and Seoul, along with an office and viewing room in Beijing.



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Press Inquiries




Europe  
Rebecca Riegelhaupt  
Communications Director  
rriegelhaupt@pacegallery.com  
+44 7917 909779

Kirsteen Cairns  
PR & Events Associate  
kcairns@pacegallery.com  
+44 7467 830230

Sam Talbot  
sam@sam-talbot.com  
+44 7725 184630

Sales Inquiries  
Pace Gallery  
geneva@pacegallery.com

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