

CHAR SCHWALL

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Artist Statement

Char Schwall's creative practice is an exploration of two material languages, paint and textiles, as well as the gender implications of different media and materials. Is sewing a feminine art, or not? Do materials have a culturally implied gender, or not? Her work investigates concepts of surface, gendered space, fluidity, and overall softness within an aesthetic trajectory of openness. Her sewn fabric appliqué pieces reference garments and her gender transformation; imagery of the folds of dresses echo the unfolding and malleability of subjectivity. Schwall's paintings explore the complex and sometimes controversial, relationship between the feminine and the fluid. In the paintings, organic forms break open, spill forward, and emerge from either the center or the outside edge of the picture plane. In this sense, the work interrogates and critiques modernist structures through the point of view of water. Shapes and patterns break free and/or split apart; fold inward and/or wrap around; and open in ways that evoke the growth or birth process. There is interaction of various parts, yet emptiness remains central to the picture plane of each canvas. The work seeks to create places of openness, of a relation to the other; a generative place where birth and rebirth can continuously prevail.