

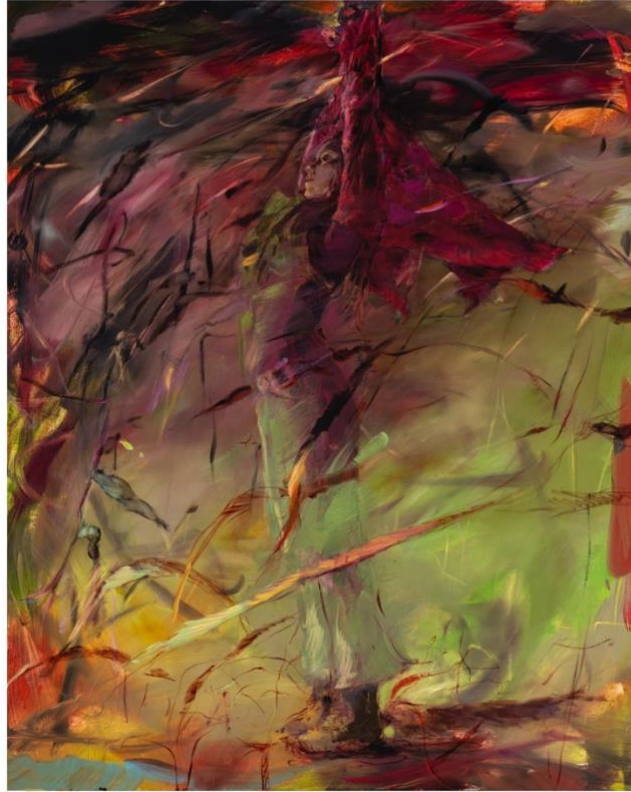


# Fredericks & Freiser

## Independent Art Fair 2024 - Booth 603

*VIP Preview: Thursday, May 9*

*General Admission: Friday May 10 through Sunday May 12*



**Caroline Absher**, “*Until Next Time*,” 2024. Oil on canvas, 72 x 58 inches. Image courtesy of Fredericks & Freiser, NY.

**Fredericks & Freiser** is pleased to announce their participation in the Independent Art Fair with a solo booth of new paintings by **Caroline Absher**. This new series of paintings imagine a world that positions patience, stillness, and surrender as inherently powerful and energetic states of being. Often featuring a heroine who has all the dynamism of a larger-than-life spirit or goddess, these works capture a still point in a quickly turning world. They dream of destruction and creation, but also of hidden landscapes and whimsical adventure. Sometimes, their figures pay attention to something just beyond the pictorial space of the canvas, breaking down barriers between the world of the canvas and that of the viewer. Despite their bright colors and bold brushwork, these paintings are fundamentally gentle, revealing their interiors only to those who look openly and without preconceived notions about what they might find.

Indeed, Absher’s work stands out from a cohort of painters who blend figuration and abstraction through her unique use of surprise as a compositional tool: these paintings are not always what they seem to be at first glance. Some viewers may initially be entranced by the quality of their brushy abstractions, only for

hidden figures to suddenly come into focus in a moment of startling clarity. The nature of these works is thus itself in a state of constant flux, of rapidly shifting energy and perceptions, even as the paint itself remains static. Resolving in their own time, these works are notable in their ability to absorb a viewer into a world that transcends the mundane and hold multiple layers of insight simultaneously. Each stroke of paint represents a veil of experience that obscures and reveals in equal measures.

Like a skipping stone across the centuries, Absher's work pays homage to art historical references as diverse as medieval European bestiaries and illuminated manuscripts, nineteenth-century Japanese woodblock prints, and the paintings of the Fauves and the Pre-Raphaelites. The presence of a divine spirituality contributes to a sense that these large-scale paintings enact and demand a dissolution of the self into an ephemeral moment of universal connection: a communion between artist, painting, and viewer. By picturing moments where a figure becomes one with her whirling surroundings, the line between interiority and external environments blurs and trembles. The fantastical use of color is deeply inspired by Fauve landscapes like Henri Matisse's *Bonheur de vivre*, while also nodding to the wild caprice of personified beasts sometimes found hiding within these abstractions. These animals, who are by no means tame, come to life from the pages of bestiaries written in a pre-modern age, at a time when our understanding of the natural world was still imbued with a sense of mystery, wonder, companionship, and reverence.

With flashes of crimson and cobalt, Absher orchestrates a symphony of color and brushwork, captured at the split second of rest before the final note sounds. She captures an innate sense of potential energy that can only be unlocked through careful looking and an open, curious mind. Rather than barreling through at full speed, these works seduce and entice the viewer to be still, to hold one's breath, to surrender oneself to a different kind of power.