

Christine Frerichs: “Beacon” At Klowden Mann



“Wet Moon, Clear Path (Tucson),” 2017, oil and acrylic on canvas, 71" x 51"
Photo: Lee Thompson, courtesy of Klowden Mann

The paintings in Christine Frerichs’ recent series, aptly titled *Beacon*, shimmer with concentric waves of energy and radiant light. In the way that a beacon is by definition, a light set up in a high or prominent position as a warning, signal or celebration, in these paintings, the Los Angeles-based artist focuses thematically on the depiction of light as a kind of life aura, while also suggesting a metaphoric guiding force or elevated consciousness. Intensely symbolic, the *Beacon* paintings are a natural evolution from Frerichs’ 2015 series *Serenade*, which leaned toward pure abstraction. Straddling the transitional border between abstract and representational imagery, the latter works constitute a nuanced segue into the realm of surreal allegorical landscapes.

Based on memory, the paintings allude to the atmospheric quality of light in Los Angeles, Tucson and New York—all places with emotional resonance for the artist. Thickly layered and textured, many of the works feature concentric outlines of a figure eight, repeated like ripples. A trademark motif Frerichs introduces in her paintings, the enigmatic “8” shape symbolizes the human figure. Indirectly, this form interjects a subtle figurative imprint onto the work, while also providing a framework upon which to define her composition. Paintings with two figure eights, as in *Silent Night*, (2017) in which two canvases are joined, connote a couple.

In *Wet Moon, Clear Path (Tucson)*, (2017) bushes and cactus frame a mysterious winding path in a desert landscape. In the sky above, a crescent moon appears to emit glowing light, echoed by the radiating ripples of figure eights, formed as they are in raised impasto lines. As the viewer shifts position, light reflected on the surface moves in a *trompe l’oeil* effect. We are drawn into the scene, as if the artist has beckoned for us to wander down her path, guided by a mesmerizing beacon of light.