

## Exhibition Review: “Lisa Corinne Davis: Syllogism” at Miles McEnery Gallery, Chelsea

*(On view through October 25, 2025)*

18 October 2025 | By Liam Otero



New York, NY: Miles McEnery Gallery, “Lisa Corinne Davis: Syllogism,”  
4 September - 25 October 2025.  
All photo courtesy of Miles McEnery Gallery.

It takes two to tango, and the same could be said of Lisa Corinne Davis’s paintings. Her latest solo exhibition and second with Miles McEnery Gallery, “Syllogism,” features the artist’s newest series of large-scale, colorfully bombastic paintings whose surfaces are teeming with a synergetic vitality. Allow me to challenge your understanding of art for a moment to underscore the reality that Davis should not merely be reduced to solely an abstract painter, for her paintings are more so a formal interplay between abstraction and figuration, often with a blurring of boundaries as to where one ends and one begins (or, perhaps, a mark of perpetual continuity like in a Möbius strip).

There is a term that I recently learned at a design exhibition called “power clashing,” which describes when certain stylistic traits that are normally in visual contrast or conflict with one another are deliberately paired together as a creative statement. Though the term is more synonymous with fashion & design, I truly believe Davis’s paintings are the perfect embodiment of that concept on the Visual Arts front for their intentional application of opposing aesthetic elements, shifting patterns, and unstable, ever-changing planes or grids.

At an imposing scale of 80 x 60 inches, *Illusive Location* (2025) disrupts the very foundation of the grid, one of the oldest and most important facets of art, by conceiving it as an elastic and malleable structure that almost ebbs and flows. Furthermore, the lines that hold up this grid are not uniform, for



*Categorical Contrivance*, 2025, Oil on canvas,  
70 x 55 inches.

possibly half of them are connected by thin strips of colors from every conceivable shade, whereas other lines are blue that rest askance over pinkish lines. Behind the shaky grid lies a lush terrain of green, yellow, and greenish-yellow squares with a light sprinkling of darkened blue squares along the extreme edges (but only ever so slightly). Aside from an occasional magenta-red square in the middle, a golden swoosh that loosely resembles a Möbius Strip swirls around the mostly green-yellow background. Geometric abstraction could be one possible reading of a work like this for its seemingly heavy emphasis on shapes and repetition, yet I cannot help but discover figuration in that this scene reminds me of a bird’s-eye view of a rural landscape, where the strips could be roads and the squares as plots of land.



*Illusive Location*, 2025, Oil on canvas,  
80 x 60 inches.

This visual or conceptual mapping is not exclusive to this one painting, for it comes up many times in every other piece. As I already articulated, that mapping could be read in either the literal sense or interpreted as a ground

on which many different visual modes are employed (for me, I don’t take an “either / or” approach, but rather the “both / and” way).

*Volatile Precept* (2025), or what I call “the vortex painting,” takes the grid in an entirely new direction (or dimension) where Davis’s play on perspective seems to cross from the two-dimensional into the threshold of the three-dimensional. A small central helix-like swarming of pink, white, and yellow squares opens up to a much larger expanse of enlarged and stretched squares of the same colors within a similar kind of untethered grid system.

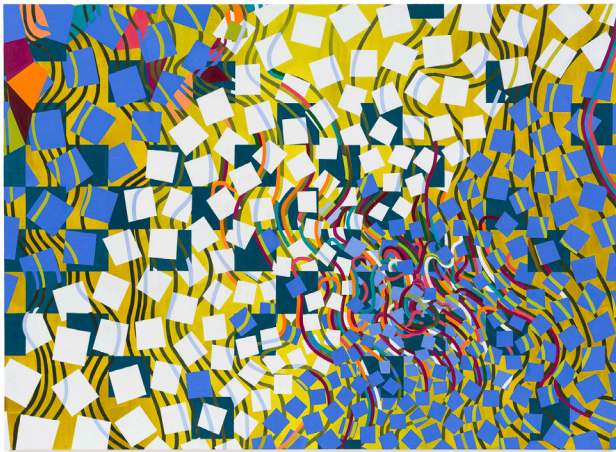


*Volatile Precept*, 2025, Oil on canvas, 70 x 55  
inches.

*Fleeting Form* (2025) was a terrific example of a work that upended traditional notions of color theory in preference for novel takes on how to group disparate hues. Even after looking at this painting in the last four or so trips I've made to the gallery, I still cannot quite figure out which layer is the topmost as there is a dizzying array of dancing squares, some that are in clear focus, and others that are bisected by slightly bent rectangular blocks. The color choices are really fascinating because there's a mix of the vibrant (hot pink and fiery orange), the earthy (dark purples with a hint of bark brown), and the cool (varying shades of blues and lighter greens). Additionally, pockets of whitened negative space peer in from behind the jumble of forms to create a kind of "breathing room" according to Davis.



*Fleeting Form*, 2025, Acrylic and oil on canvas, 80 x 60 inches.



*Convulsive Calculation*, 2025, Oil on canvas, 72 x 100 inches.

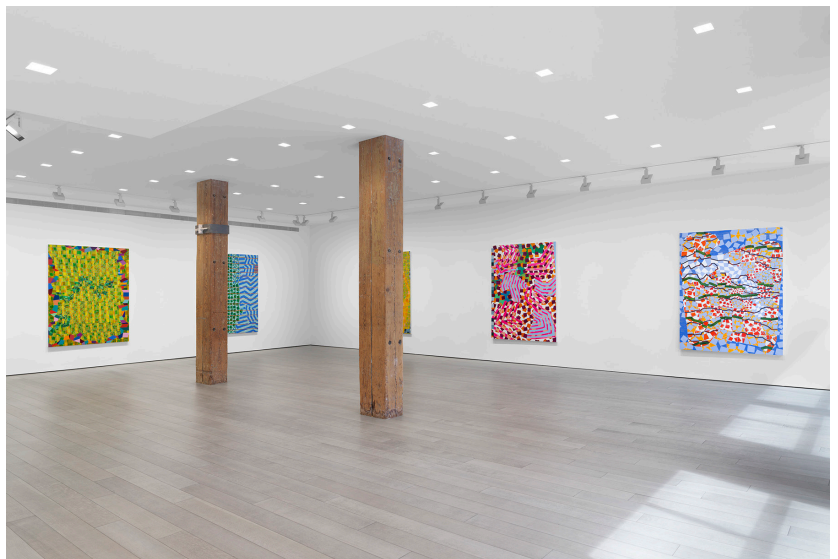
Chaos looks like it's taken the reins, but has it really?

When speaking with Davis during a studio visit that coincided with the exhibition, she eloquently explained her meticulous thought process behind her painterly tact. Without giving away the gamut of the master painter's secrets, Davis maintains a healthy balance between controlled planning and free-form expression. Much of the paintings in this series took a few months to complete, which automatically implies that there were stoppages in the creative process to let new ideas flow and simmer before resuming work. But then, a jolt of

inspiration will strike and a fresh idea not originally conceived as part of the composition would enter the canvas. Again, this is another kind of power clashing, not in style this time, but in painterly execution.

I opened this review with a reference to the tango because this was an association that sprung to mind, not during my trips to the exhibition, but in conversation with Davis at her Bushwick studio. There was a mutual understanding between us that these paintings are not passive images, but rather extremely involved vignettes of vibrating colors, thrumming figures, and mixed use of perspectives on an aggrandized scale. You must be ready to commit yourselves to seeing and experiencing Davis's paintings for the totality of her images makes for a wholly enticing and breathtakingly stimulating tango of the ocular senses.

In addition to having had her work shown at such prestigious venues like that of Miles McEnery, Lisa Corinne Davis is also an equally accomplished Professor of Art and is currently teaching in the MFA program at Hunter College.



New York, NY: Miles McEnery Gallery, "Lisa Corinne Davis: Syllogism," 4 September - 25 October 2025.