

# HESSE FLATOW

**Louise Belcourt: *Hug***

May 25 – July 7, 2023

Opening reception: May 25, 6-8pm

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HESSE FLATOW is pleased to announce the opening of *Hug*, an exhibition of paintings by the Canadian-American artist Louise Belcourt, marking her first solo presentation with the gallery and her first solo in New York in over ten years.



Throughout her decades-long practice, Belcourt has developed a singular vocabulary of organic forms whose dynamic shapeshifting between the concrete and equivocal invite viewers on a journey through a chimeric landscape. An object in her studio, the memory of a lost pet, a scenic detail outside a window, all distill into amorphous shapes that are endowed with anthropomorphic dispositions and agencies. As she intuitively builds her compositions, her silhouettes reach across and touch each other to form connective links or road maps across a meditative kind of reverie.

The measured balancing act between figuration and abstraction prescribes a mode of viewing that zooms in and out of focus. Looking turns into experiencing as the distance afforded through identification collapses into an immersive, imaginative haze of fluid connotations and associations. A blush, scalloped shape morphs into flower petals, and furthermore into fingers within Belcourt's workflow of propositions, each metaphysically eclipsed or engulfed by its successor.

For her exhibition *Hug*, Belcourt leans into the bodily, particularly through her use of fleshy and neutral toned palettes, as well as in the intertwining of forms whose proclivities may sway from the protective to the predatory. Her undulating contours offset what appear to be appendages with crevices, forming narrative threads of embracing arms or enclosing jaws that surround and consume. This ensnaring hold extends beyond the edges of the canvas, as Belcourt is interested less in a detached form of representation, and more in a kind of conjuring within the mind-body of the viewer.

**Louise Belcourt** (b. 1961, Montreal, Quebec) has resided in New York City since 1984. Called a "Physical Abstractionist" by Roberta Smith for *The New York Times* (1996), her work has evolved from pure abstraction, through a form of narrative representation to a personal iconography that combines abstracted landscape and urban architecture. Her work has been exhibited in solo shows in New York, Paris, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Quebec and in group exhibitions in Europe and across the United States, including at The Brooklyn Museum; The Fleming Museum, Vermont; The Drawing Center, New York; and The Weatherspoon Museum of Art, North Carolina. Collections include The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, The Progressive Corporation, and Deutsche Bank. She has received awards from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation 2000, 2017, the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation 1984, 1985 and the New York Foundation for the Arts 2015, in addition to the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation 2012.

Image: Louise Belcourt, *Animal Head #4*, 2023, oil on panel, 24 x 26 in (61 x 66 cm)