

**LIZA LOU — EVERYTHING MORE IDEAL**

The work is about amplification, it's about making things more ideal. Beads are a way to bring something further into view; they make more of things. There's that poem by Pessoa where he writes about wanting flowers to be more flowers than flowers, and in this body of work I'm trying to make the heroics of painting even more heroic. I'm using beads as a way to make paint more paint than paint.

I love watching footage of the NY school, predominantly men in suits with cigarettes, and this very serious conversation like they are talking about nuclear physics. As a young artist, I didn't approach art as part of that lineage. I wanted to stake out wilder territory and use non-traditional materials in order to comment upon what is seen and not seen, what is and what isn't taken seriously or permitted, and it was always about valorizing whatever it was I was putting my hand to.

Lately, I've been applying beads to a form of spontaneity and gesture that very clearly references the heroics and fetishization of the paint stroke. I'm asking questions about what qualifies as a painting. I'm inspired by the limitations inherent in my material—you can't blend beads or rinse them out—there's a limited palette a straight out of the paint tube quality, and once they're down on canvas, it's very hard to get rid of them, so it involves this improv where every stroke requires everything I have, my full attention. I'm hanging on every breath while I work, it's this tightrope walk, these aren't accidents, and every mark becomes this kind of violin-crescendo-here-comes—a-brush-stroke-feeling, and the tiniest daub aspires to monumentality.

It's kind of like opera—I listen to Maria Callas a lot when I work. The human body at full capacity operating at the top of her range. That's what I aspire to. I want every gesture to feel as though it matters, so there's this gravity and at the same time, a feeling of lightness and play. There's a Zen aspect to apprehending life at a microscopic, cellular level. It really blew my mind when I saw images of a blob of paint under a microscope and it looked exactly like a cluster of beads. But maybe so does everything, and that's what's so essential about the material—when you get down to it, everything is a bead, a cell, an atom.

"For me this sun, these meadows and  
these flowers are enough. But if they  
weren't enough, What I would want is a  
sun more sun than the sun, Meadows  
more meadows than these meadows,  
Flowers more flowers than these flowers—  
Everything more ideal than what it is,  
in the same way and same manner! That  
thing over there more there than it is!" — Fernando Pessoa