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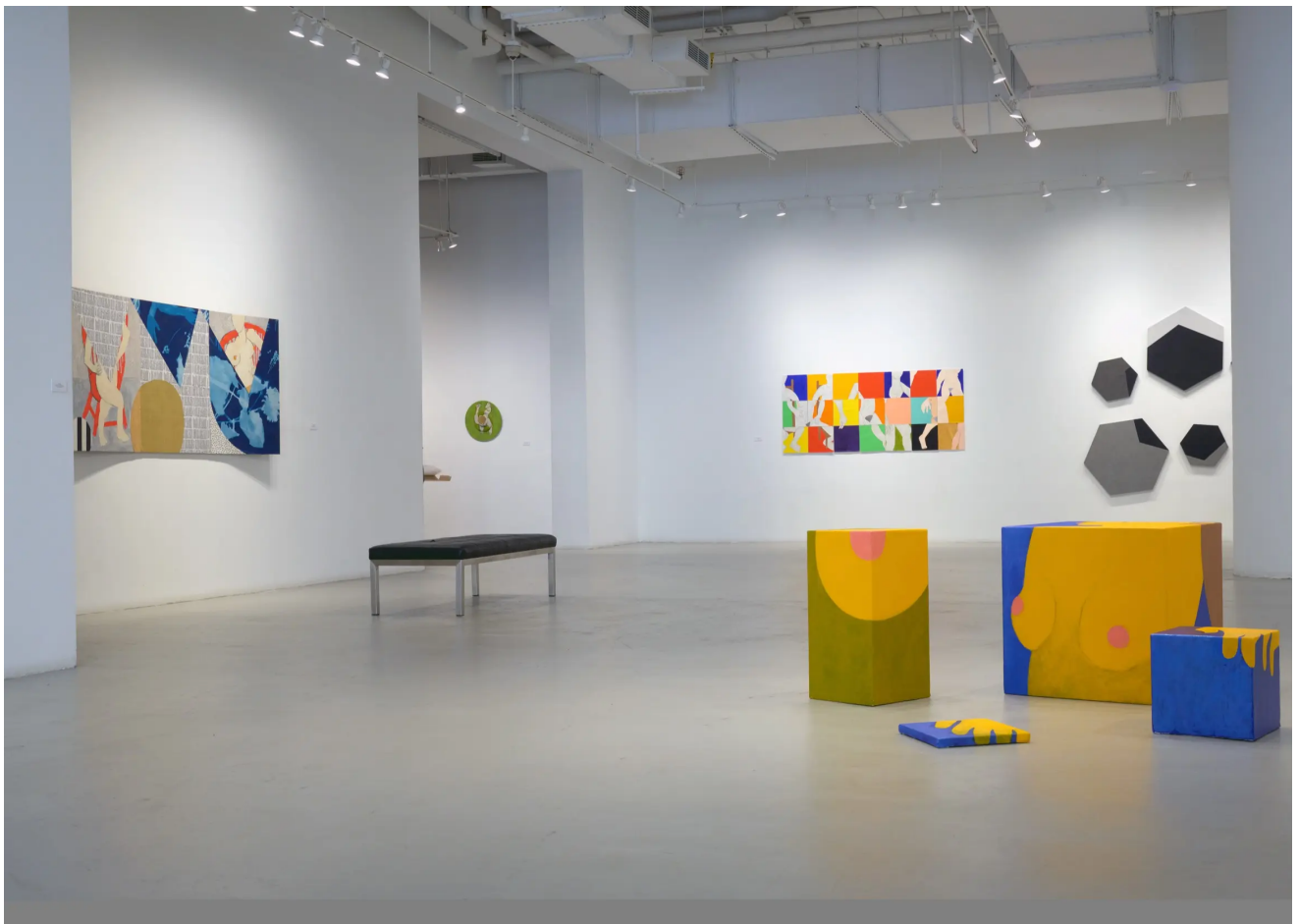
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On Machines Without a Canon

ARTSEEN | OCTOBER 2026

Susan Weil: *Moving in Time Space*

By Tom McGlynn



Installation view, *Susan Weil: Moving in Time Space* at Sundaram Tagore Gallery, New York, 2026.

Courtesy Sundaram Tagore Gallery.

Susan Weil's work first came to wide public prominence very early in her career, when an example of her "blueprint" series *Female Figure* (1950), a collaboration with her then husband Robert Rauschenberg, was both exhibited at MoMA, and featured in *Life* magazine, in 1951. The curator of photography at MoMA at the time, Edward Steichen, recognized the contemporary significance of these non-traditional, camera-less collages, inspired in part by Weil's childhood experiments with cyanotypes. Alternate modes of presentation have since been an integral part of Weil's approach to her painting, drawing and sculptural practice, yet strongly influenced by the methodical approach to color and structure exemplified by one of her most important mentors at Black Mountain College, Josef Albers. This current exhibition offers a selective survey of most recent and historical works that elucidates Weil's ambition to stretch the synaptic connections between aleatory improvisation and procedural heuristics in her work.





Susan Weil, *Revolution*, 2009. Acrylic on canvas, 81.5 x 62 inches. Image courtesy of Sundaram Tagore Gallery.

The very lively installation of the works tends to disrupt any progressive chronology which sets distinct bodies of work in relative motion. Sculptures, works on paper, paintings and kinetic structures from different phases of the artist's career underscores the show's title explicitly instigating a Time /Space condition. A composition from an earlier phase of Weil's practice, *Revolution* (2009) could effectively work as an analog index to the notion of relative time and movement as its six repetitive hexagonal canvases diminish in size in an approximate spiral. The artist cannily avoids an even progression though, as the composition gets upended by her inclusion of a larger hexagon toward the end of the spiral. In addition to this visual curveball, Weil paints a seventh, larger hexagon that transects the entire spiral. All of this is done in a scale of achromatic values that add their own dynamic counterpoint. The piece combines the timeless authority of a geometer with the evanescent

improvisation of a jazz musician. *Memoremem* (2005) offers an interesting contrast to *Revolution* in that a base note gray scale progression of vertical panels, almost as if a falling sequence of fence slats, organizes time in a more linear fashion from left to right. In this instance however each panel is embellished with gestural painting that invokes a grassy landscape which impression is augmented by natural collage elements like a bird's wing and a copper "necklace" that nevertheless calls to mind falling leaves strung together in a backyard lapidary. In both works one discerns the influence of Albers in how color and structure are strongly interdependent.

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Susan Weil, *Bicircle*, 2007. Acrylic on canvas, 56 x 83 inches. Courtesy of Sundaram Tagore Gallery.

The DNA of Cubism practically resides in any work taking on the multiplicity of forms presented as a single glimpse. In *Bicircle* (2007) Weil playfully leans over the handlebars of Cubism's theories of formal relativity. A raucously fragmented bicycle rider in orange and black is schematically painted across panels set akimbo to one another. Like in *Revolution* an approximate circle (in this instance more like an ellipse) organizes the work in a perpetually recursive dynamic. As in the former works discussed, a gray "control" element moderates this dynamism into something resembling a classical frieze. Such chromatic discretion on the part of the artist is evident throughout the show. In *About Time* (2023), for instance, Weil demonstrates again her subtle understanding of how hue, value and saturation can impart a

sense of timeless gravity to a subject set within an urgently fractured plane. Here an abstract female form is segmented together with a chair and what seems to be a clock in a nine square grid of panels painted in delicate tones of undersaturated oranges, yellows and grays. The artist's rendering of these fragmented forms is very basic and calls to mind the facility of line and form in the quirky figuration of John Wesley. Weil is obviously much less narratively inclined, yet it's interesting to observe how both artists reduced their forms as an inclination toward a kind of monumental quiddity. Weil extends the format of a gridded figure in a more recent composition *Moving in Time Space (Situations)* (2025). Here she lets loose with a chromatically expanded palette including both high and low saturations of primary and secondary hues in a 21 square, horizontally oriented grid. The female form in this work is more explicit than in *About Time* and, like the vividly expansive palette, much more actively dancing across the geometric strictures of the equilateral grid. An interesting sculptural counterpoint nearby is *Untitled (Parts Afloat)* (2026). Despite the buoyant implication of her title, here Weil plays with the reductive, formalist aspects of the phenomenological Minimalist theater, so thoroughly expounded upon by Micheal Freid, by painting each relatively sized cube form with almost cartoon impressions of the female body. Wildly hysterical juxtapositions ensue as when the pointed edge of one of the taller and larger cubes

aligns with the nipple of a breast. Rather than an illustrated "man-kind," Weil presents here a subversively annotated woman. However gravitationally situated, this particular work, like the general mood of the entire show, is floated, is piquantly elevated, by Weil's structural rigor and buoyant wit.

Tom McGlynn is an artist, writer, and independent curator based in the NYC area. His work is represented in the permanent collections of the Whitney Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum of the Smithsonian. He is currently Adjunct Assistant Professor at Parsons/ The New School.

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