



VAN GRINTEN  
DER GALERIE

## LEIGH WELLS

CONFIGURATION

25 January to 22 March, 2025





Art is restoration: the idea is to repair the damages that are inflicted in life, to make something that is fragmented into something whole.

—*Louise Bourgeois*



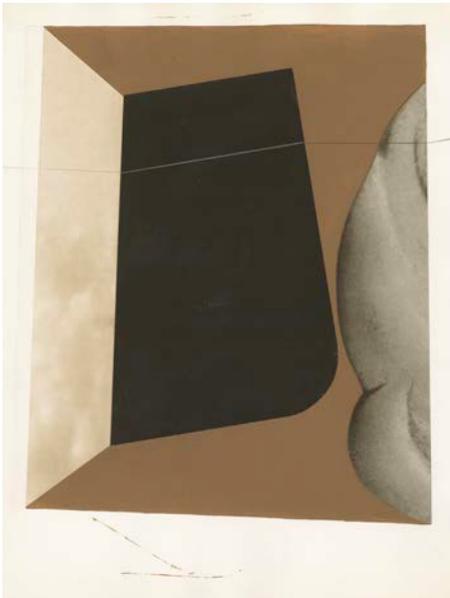
Leigh Wells' abstract, reduced collages have something elemental about them, due to their simplicity, that gives voice to deeply felt mental and emotional states. Their expressive tension is heightened by deliberate spatial and narrative ambiguity. Colored painted papers, cut in geometric or organic shapes, are combined with photographic elements found in exquisitely printed vintage classical sculpture books.

These organic, sensual-looking surfaces and purely colored shapes are subtly complemented by discrete pencil elements—whether line or shading—which emphasize the abstract compositions with tactile vibrancy and additional relief and rhythm. Painted interventions create a contrasting encounter between the more or less smooth surfaces through visible brushstrokes.

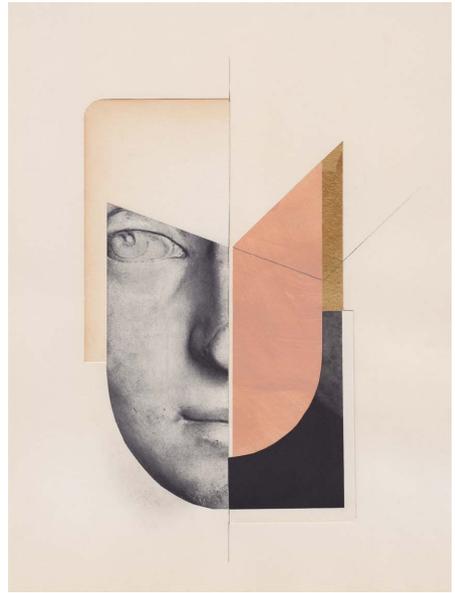
The results are abstract, delicately balanced, dynamic compositions that are reminiscent of musically inspired variations whose structure is both strict and full of lightness.

—*Van der Grinten Galerie*



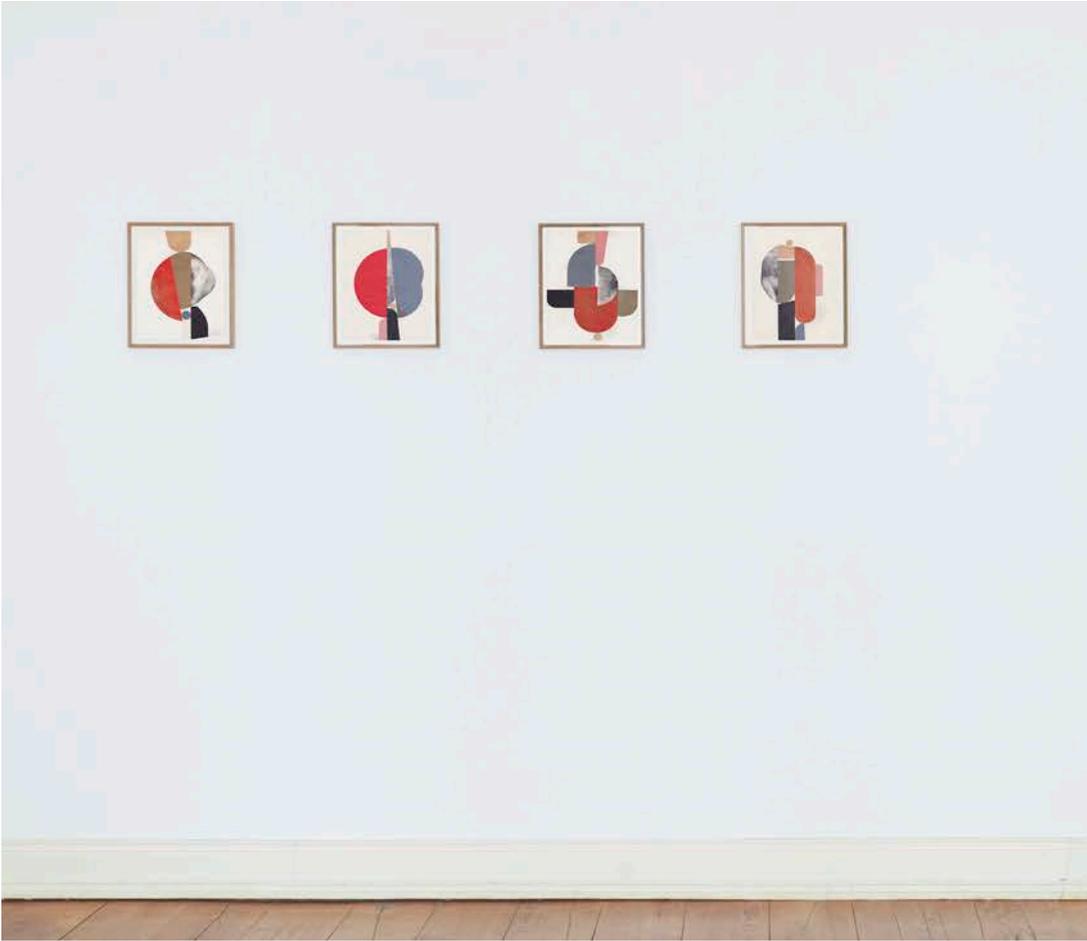


Obscure Sorrows (series), 2022, Collage and mixed media on vintage paper,  
14.625 x 11.75 in. (37.1 x 29.8 cm)



Visage (series), 2024, mixed media and graphite on paper, 10.5 x 8.5 in. (26.7 x 21.6 cm)





Abstract, delicately balanced, dynamic compositions that are reminiscent of musically inspired variations whose structure is both strict and full of lightness.

—*Van der Grinten Galerie*



Untitled (red) (series), 2023, Collage and mixed media on found paper,  
10.625 x 8.625 in. (27 x 21.9 cm)



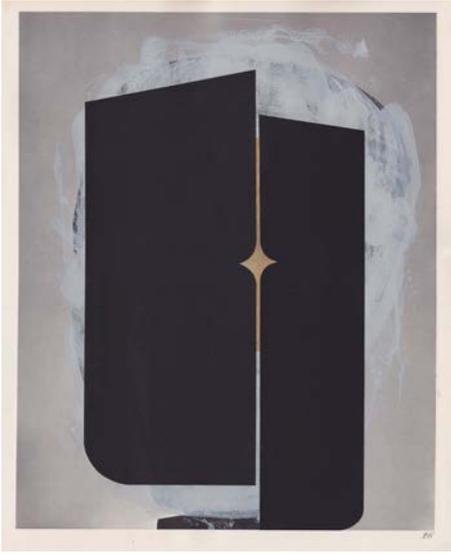
Untitled, 2024, collage on paper, 10 x 8 in. (25.4 x 20.3 cm)



Mind Reader 07, 2019, Collage, acrylic, graphite and mixed media on paper,  
30 x 22 in. (76.2 x 55.9 cm)



Mind Reader 10, 2019, Collage, acrylic, graphite and mixed media on paper,  
30 x 22 in. (76.2 x 55.9 cm)



Pareja (series), 2023, Collage and mixed media on found paper,  
14.625 x 11.625 in. (37.1 x 29.5 cm)

## A B O U T   L E I G H

Leigh Wells creates abstract paper collage and collage-like paintings on pieced textiles that consist of simple, restrained forms. She considers her practice as one of restoration and repair; finding wholeness in the fragmented. Wells intentionally incorporates ambiguity into her work to heighten its expressive tension, simultaneously evoking vulnerability and groundedness.

In addition to her current solo exhibition at Van der Grinten Gallery in Cologne, her work has been shown in New York, Los Angeles, Berlin, Hamburg and Amsterdam. Bay Area solo shows include Gregory Lind Gallery, Ampersand International Arts, and Gallery 16. She is a 2022 Pollock Krasner Foundation Grant recipient, was a SFMOMA SECA Award nominee and an artist member of Minnesota Street Studios in San Francisco.

Leigh's work has been featured in The New York Times, Harper's Magazine, and Elle Decor among other publications. She earned a BFA summa cum laude from the University of San Francisco with subsequent art studies at the San Francisco Art Institute, Crown Point Press, and Parsons in New York where she was an instructor.

## CV

### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2025 Configuration, Van der Grinten Galerie, Cologne, Germany
- 2022 Tensile Strength, The Fourth Wall, Oakland, CA (Sept-Oct)
- 2019 Scratch the Surface, Jack Fischer Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2012 Remains, Gregory Lind Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2011 Deception, Ampersand International Arts, San Francisco, CA
- 2008 New Drawings, Gallery 16, San Francisco, CA

### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 Limen, Tappan Collective, Los Angeles, CA
- 2023 The Schuh Show, Van der Grinten Galerie, Cologne, Germany  
True North, diRosa Center for Contemporary Art, Napa, CA
- 2020 Mind Reader, Markel Fine Arts Viewing Room, New York, NY
- 2019 Portrait, The Jones Institute, San Francisco, CA  
Still Yet Forward, Ampersand International Arts, San Francisco, CA
- 2018 No Rhyme or Reason, Jack Fischer Gallery, San Francisco, CA  
Paper Cuts: Large-Scale Collage, Palo Alto Art Center, Palo Alto, CA
- 2016 Fog a Mirror, CES Gallery, Los Angeles, CA  
Cutting Edge: New Works in Collage, 2731 Prospect, Cleveland, OH
- 2015 Variations on Abstraction 2010-2015, Transmission Gallery, Oakland, CA
- 2014 Mountain, PDX Contemporary Art, Portland, OR  
The Age of Collage, Gallery Feinkunst Krüger, Hamburg, Germany  
Feature, Berkeley Art Center, Berkeley, CA
- 2013 The Age of Collage, Gestalten Space, Berlin, Germany  
col-la-ge, mini | galerie, Amsterdam, Netherlands  
In Spite Of, The Holland Project, Reno, NV  
Summer Group Show, Gregory Lind Gallery, San Francisco, CA  
Range, PDX Contemporary Art, Portland, OR
- 2012 Decade, Gregory Lind Gallery, San Francisco, CA  
Ninth Annual Benefit Auction, The Drawing Center, New York, NY
- 2011 Tensile Strength, ZieherSmith, New York, NY  
Building Context, Guerrero Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2008 These Are the People in Your Neighborhood, Gallery 16, San Francisco, CA

## HONORS

- 2022 Pollock Krasner Foundation Grant Recipient  
SFMOMA SECA Award Nominee
- 2021 Anonymous Was a Woman Award Nominee
- 2020 Minnesota Street Studios, San Francisco, Artist member (2018-2020)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY / PUBLICATIONS

- Pritikin, Renny. "Leigh Wells at The Fourth Wall", *Squarecylinder*, September 22, 2022
- Taylor, Mark. "Tensile Strength: Leigh Wells", *SF/Arts*, September 3, 2022
- "Reviewing the Book Review", *New York Times Book Review*, February 16, 2021
- "To Philosophize Is to Learn How to Die", *New York Times Opinion Pages*, April 11, 2020
- "It's Not Just a Chemical Imbalance", *New York Times Opinion Pages*, July 27, 2019
- "What Do We Know?", *New York Times Opinion Pages*, December 31, 2016
- "I Am a Dangerous Professor", *New York Times Opinion Pages*, November 30, 2016
- "What is the Use of Regret?", *New York Times Opinion Pages*, November 12, 2016
- "Why Do Anything?", *New York Times Opinion Pages*, September 17, 2016
- Seligman, Craig. "Fitted to the Occasion," *Elle Decor*, March 2015. pp 138-141
- The Age of Collage: Contemporary Collage in Modern Art, Berlin: Gestalten, 2013. pp 114-117
- Danza, Emmie. "Leigh Wells", *The Drawing Center, The Bottom Line*, August 5, 2013
- Grattan, Nikki, "Leigh Wells", *In The Make*, March 2013
- Gallagher, James. "Cut-Up Nostalgia." *UnFLOP Paper 4*. Fall/Winter 2012-2013
- Baker, Kenneth. "Leigh Wells: Remains." *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 4, 2012
- Baker, Kenneth. "Don't Miss," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 6, 2011
- Baker, Kenneth. "Collage, culture and mulching at Guerrero Gallery," *SF Chronicle*, Aug 27, 2011

## COMMISSIONS / COLLECTIONS

- Chevron Corporate Collection, San Francisco, CA
- Cosmopolitan Hotel, Las Vegas, NV
- Norwegian Cruise Lines
- Palace Hotel, San Francisco, CA
- Salvatore Ferragamo Collection, Milan, Italy
- Superba Hollywood, Los Angeles, CA

## EDUCATION

- 1998-2021 Studio Art Studies at Parsons/New School, New York,  
Crown Point Press, and San Francisco Art Institute
- 1988 BFA, Summa Cum Laude, University of San Francisco, San Francisco, CA



# LEIGH WELLS

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