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## Liliane Tomasko: *Poem Things*

By Maisie Molot



Liliane Tomasko, *POEM THING* (so that it, now bound in and now embracing, grows alternately stone in you and star), 2025. Acrylic and acrylic spray on linen, 60 × 80 inches. Courtesy the artist and Nino Mier Gallery.

Each abstract painting in Liliane Tomasko's *Poem Things*, on view at Nino Mier Gallery, uses forms and colors to construct a distinct emotional presence. The show's title references the German concept "Dinggedicht," which suggests that every object carries its own independent life. Tomasko illustrates this by making her art its own subject, constructing portraits of brushstrokes and embedding value into color and forms.

Large colorwork paintings adorn the walls of the gallery's first room, interspersed by lines from Rainer Maria Rilke's poem, "Evening." Each of these is titled *Poem Thing*, and their grandeur allows for each brushstroke to be closely examined. Some look frayed by bristle lines, while others layer ghostly, translucent shapes of color. Tomasko uses both acrylic and acrylic spray paint, and her bold colors are often imbued with a softness due to the texture of the spray. Geometric and organic forms coexist on these canvases as do surprising color combinations. An arc of baby blue mixed with turquoise is calming while red shapes of mushrooms excite. Relationships are formed between brushstrokes.

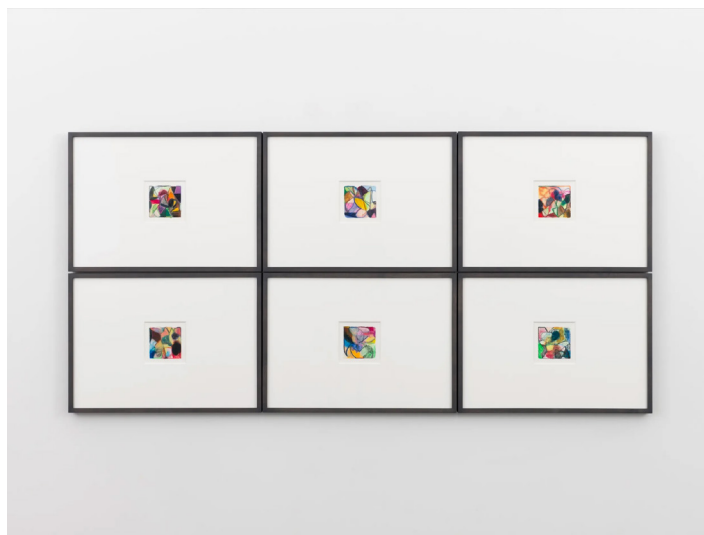
Fragmented lines from "Evening" subtitle each of the large paintings, providing them distinctive, individual voices. Tomasko's colors work in tandem with the poetry to craft an emotional atmosphere. "Evening" explores a desire to belong within the world's dualities and its intimidating enormity. By breaking down the poem, Tomasko alters the meaning of the lines to resolve the fear of vastness Rilke imparts.



Liliane Tomasko, *Untitled 1*, 2025. Acrylic on canvas pad, 28 ½ × 25 ½ inches (framed). Courtesy the artist and Nino Mier Gallery.

Three of these paintings are diptychs whose left and right sides are composed of contrasting colors, reflecting this focus on duality. In *POEM THING (so that it, now bound in and now embracing, grows alternately stone in you and star)* (all works 2025), the left side is primarily composed of passionate reds and pinks while the right is grounded in organic green and blue tones. In the center of the warmer half, a sweeping line resembling an “m” is rendered in black and white. It connects to a brown line in the shape of a “v” in the green painting’s center. If the “m” and “v” were placed on top of each other rather than side by side, they would form a heart. Other forms and curves in orange and teal that frame the “m” and “v” also resemble misshapen and fractured hearts. By naming the painting with the line, “so that it, now bound in and now embracing, grows alternately stone in you and star,” Tomasko suggests the beauty of contrasts uniting.

Three medium-sized rectangular paintings and two sets of six small drawings hang in the second room. The paintings are titled *Untitled 1*, *Untitled 2*, and *Untitled 4*. Repeating the use of *Untitled 4* ties two of the works together, and differentiates them from *Untitled 1*, which is the airiest of the three. In one *Untitled 4*, an undefined shape of baby pink, with a texture like frosting, is layered over vibrant fuchsia. The brighter pink appears in the unfilled lines of the light pink. This tactile appearance brings a playfulness to the artwork—as if the artist was excited with every brushstroke made.



Liliane Tomasko, *Psyche of the Portrait (Suite 1–6)*, 2025. Six individual works in oil pastel on paper, each: 15 5/8 × 21 5/8 inches (framed). Courtesy the artist and Nino Mier Gallery.

The smallest paintings carry a gentleness reserved for their size. The two sets of six oil pastel drawings are titled *Psyche of the Portrait (Suite 1–6)*, and *Psyche of the Portrait (Suite 7–12)* respectively. The literal translation is the soul of a painting, which is the crux of this show and feels accurate especially to these tender works, which are small enough that you must physically stand very close to examine overlapping bright orange and sage green circles. Their textures differ from one to the next with the colors melding into one another easily in some, while lines are dense like colored pencil marks in others. Oil pastel adds a sense of freeness through its tendency to smudge and spread, reinforcing the concept that each artwork has its own life.

As the paintings' sizes transition from large to small, and Tomasko moves from acrylic paint to acrylic mimicking pastel, and finally to oil pastel, it is as if the viewer is witnessing a life cycle through these changes. The viewer can reach the intimacy of the smaller works only by walking through the space of large paintings. While the subject of colorwork remains, details shift, altering emotional resonance and affirming that every work of art carries its own life.